Letters and Religion

By John Jay Chapman

Pacific School of
Religion
Berkeley, Calif.

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BY JOHN JAY CHAPMAN

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Contents

Part I Words and the Spirit

Old Things and New 3
Fatigue and Unrest 21
The Two Languages 31
The Story and Sayings of Christ . 51

Part II Comment and Reflection

All Things Remain Within Us . . 77
The Solitudes 80
Pauses and Plunges 87
He That Hath Ears To Hear . . 89
Day Before Yesterday 90
A Modern Instance 92
The Heroes of Science 96
Now Is the Time 98
Personality and Institutions . . 103
Heaven and Earth To Gain One Proselyte 108
The Theologies 110
Sisyphus 118
Spectres 119
Beauty and Power 120
Rhapsodists 121
The Skeptics. 122
The Victor–Victim 125
The Indian Saint 127
Sickness 130

Part 1

Words and the Spirit

The Archer

What aim, what purpose in it all have I?
I draw an arrow and I let it fly
To vanish in the invulnerable sky.

Shadows there are that stalk the world of sense —
Dissolving symbols of Impermanence,
Through which the arrow takes its flight intense.

Nought in themselves, they brighten till they mean
Something in the beyond — a point of sheen
Piercing the blindnesses that intervene.

Thus archer after archer bends the bow
And dedicates his arrows to the glow;
But where they fall or strike — he does not know.

Old Things and New

The operation of reading a book is so familiar that we discount the mystery involved in it. Suppose that, instead of reading the page, we held the bound volume to our ear and it spoke to us. None of all the wisdom and pleasure of literature, whether sacred or profane, lies in the text we read, but spins and dances unimaginably in the chambers of the brain, in that camera obscura where all things meet. Thoughts that date from Egypt are here, and sights seen yesterday; the memories of childhood, and the words of Hamlet, Ezekiel, Job, Wordsworth, Alfred de Musset. And this stage and show-house of the brain, in which the plot of our life passes, is the greenroom of the Universe. Here divine force puts on its bright harness of idea, and enacts plays that clarify and expound us to ourselves: they mediate between us and truth, till we come to see that we, too, are but walking portions of the invisible.

The Greek and Latin classics will never be forgotten. The reasons for this are so obvious and so multifarious that they cannot be summarized,

and hardly need a passing reference. All learning is an enlarged edition of the alphabet, and forms a kind of labyrinth to which the alphabet is the point of entry. The path from the nursery to antiquity is so well beaten that many intelligent children, born into the world during an indefinite future, are sure to find their pleasure in wandering toward the sources of excitement and intellectual fruition in Greek and Roman literature. There is hardly a prediction that common sense can hazard about civilization more likely than this: that the classics will survive and continue to irradiate their influence upon thoughtful people in all coming ages.

It is easier to imagine a substitute for telegraphy than a substitute for Horace's *Odes;* for the contrivances that harness electrical power change rapidly — a new one replaces an old. But the vehicles which carry spiritual power around the world are so subtle and complex, so much a part of the human mind's own history, that they speak to every generation in its home tongue, and live down a hundred theories of scientific truth and ten thousand contrivances of material convenience.

I cite Horace as a symbol, and because he represents, not religion, nor the higher kinds of

poetry, nor anything which appeals to a special passion in the reader, but because he is in himself a microcosm of social wisdom more universal than anything which philosophy, poetry, or religion has let loose on mankind. He has a noble and religious attitude toward life, but expresses it not in abstractions, nor in those intense forms of feeling which appeal to highly emotional people, but in glints and glimmers which ordinary, worldly, benevolent citizens understand very well; and whatever else the future world may hold, it is certain to be full of ordinary, worldly, benevolent people. Such among them as have good wits are sure to read Horace.

Horace seems to represent an eternal type of gentleman who reappears periodically, whether under tyrannies, democracies, or socialisms; whether in slavery or at liberty; whether in Australia or South America. Such men will always crop up wherever anything arises that can be called a civilization. One reason for their resurgence is that human civilization is a continuous stream and passes on with the race. The seeds of letters are handed on like the seeds of domestic vegetables. Men will sooner find a substitute for potatoes than for Horace's *Odes*.

Perhaps if any one of us had discovered this little flower garden, — or call it a mine of precious stones, — the *Odes* of Horace, he might have prized them, yet not realized their rarity. He might have said, "How excellent they are! And no doubt there will be more of such things anon. I think I will cut and polish a few like them myself: they are agreeable." The most brilliant minds of the modern world have attempted as much during the last four hundred years, yet no one has ever been able to rival the Roman. We have thus found out that Horace is an exceedingly rare man. He is unique.

The power to enjoy life is at the bottom of Horace's popularity. It was a renewed power to enjoy life that revealed the Greek and Roman classics to the enthusiasts of the Renaissance. They rediscovered the classics because they themselves were filled with curiosity and excitement. I am aware that the question is generally stated in the other way, and that the classics are supposed to have awakened the scholars. But this would be contrary to nature. The text inspires not the eye, but the eye, the text. Upon this pin — that of successive reawakenings — hangs the continuity of human thought.

Some people think that the Great War marks

a gap and chasm in history; and so it does in political and ephemeral matters. But as to the permanencies of the world, the war was no more than a tap on a snuff box. The classics have survived many empires, and their influence has knit firmly again over the fissures where kingdoms went down.

The Greeks and Romans enjoyed life, and whenever people begin to enjoy life they will enjoy the classics. Art and letters came into existence as the creatures of happy leisure. The very word "scholarship" is derived from a Greek word meaning a loafing-place in a little square, or at a street corner, in a Greek town — an angle where men could pause and exchange ideas. All the modern serious arguments for preserving the classics seek to interpose a moral law or a material convenience where none is necessary; for pleasure is an end in itself: the force that sustains literature is spontaneous. Of all the theories that are advanced to boost the Muses, this much may be said: that the fine arts survive them. Such theories are illusory vaporings colored by the prejudices of many an epoch. They are often dogmatic and crabbed in form; yet they express a yearning. Even these theories are gropings toward leisure and happiness.

A famous English scholar who was traveling in the Greek Islands in search of texts found in a decayed monastery the floor of a chapel that was paved with priceless Greek manuscripts. The scholar wheedled the manuscripts from the monks by providing them with a new and handsome tile pavement for their chapel. Our scholars make a similar appeal to the Mammon that rules our university policy, when they try to have Greek retained on the plea of its utility. The oaks of Dodona, they say, must be preserved because they will cut up into good boards later on.

We are told, for instance, that the business man will "go farther" if he has had a classical education — as if the spread of business were, after all, the main end of life. Perhaps it is true that he will go farther, but this is not the reason for preserving the classics. They have helped him because the study of them — the life that comes out of them — has given his mind and soul the leisure to expand quietly and become acquainted with the wide and complex world, instead of his being pushed along the railroad track of a few narrow interests which he cannot even see clearly for lack of a perspective.

We are told that the mental training in Greek

and Latin is so excellent that nothing competes with it. But the people who have had the severest training in those studies are sometimes the narrowest and blindest people in the world. It is not the mere training that counts, but its accessories, its incidental outlooks and inlooks, its quietude and rumination, its enlargement of the spirit. Why not see at the outset that all this classic tradition exists as an aid to spiritual power and happiness, and that the humanities make people capable of life? Cast your eye upon the pleasures possible to the unlettered man, and then give a thought to Greece and Rome and their significance to humanity. If you must satisfy your moral cravings by groping further in the argument, and saying that happy people do more good than unhappy ones, do so by all means: that is the tile you offer for the pavement.

Another circumstance which perhaps explains the note of degradation in many arguments made by our professional guardians of learning is that these guardians are badly frightened by the inroads of Science on popular education. They are barricading themselves into new societies both in England and in America, and are bristling their best. This is the feature of a

transitional epoch, the stockade with the flag raised to be seen from afar by those on whom the future depends. But there is no need to be frightened. Both learned and unlearned seem to assume that there is a break somewhere between ancient and modern literature; this, however, is not true. The subject of "the higher education" arises in connection with universities; but it is merely a question of what you will put in the shop windows. The gentlemen who manage such institutions and the age which enjoys them can as little affect the laws of life and mind as a physical laboratory can affect the laws of gravity. No one creates cultivation. Nor is there a point at which you can put in a pin and say, Imagination begins here; Morality there; now bring on your classic influence. Robin Hood and the *Æneid* are not separate facts in the history of the mind or as influences upon the future. You can no more eliminate Latin and Greek from modern education than you can eliminate columns and arches from architecture. Your architects will forever be studying the old buildings in their efforts to express themselves in stone; and literary men will arise among you who work their way back to the classics in their efforts to express themselves in print. In the

long run you cannot suppress Homer and Virgil; if your colleges suppress them, new prophets outside of the colleges will spring up to proclaim them. The young salmon finds nowhere to pause in his homeward exploration of the coast till he comes to his own river mouth and leaps his own dams; and the bright youths of future times are sure to find the classic sources, no matter what sluices you erect, or what sewage of philosophy you pour into the stream of thought from your modern canning-factories. Greece and Rome are accessible. Scholarship cannot enclose, nor ignorance forget them.

One can hardly expect that a Renaissance shall be running as a continuous performance in Europe or America, but the most poetic and powerful minds in the world will always prevent the old wells from being clogged up or lost. After all, there have not been many great intellects on earth. A few minds have done all the thinking for humanity. This was their function, and was a natural process. They are few, yet they suffice.

If it were not for this normal paucity of metaphysical genius, one might think it strange that Modern Science, which has occupied the attention of so many able men, should have thrown

no new light on education. We might think it strange, for instance, that a scientific age like the present should so far specialize in biological theories of civilization as to think that any new philosophy — even its own — could make a new habitat for the human spirit. The literature of Europe has been the nest and habitat of Western intellect for two thousand years. Yet it seems to require a poet as great as Goethe to see this, and to take a bird's-eye view of the whole subject. Our scientists have been technical men; and yet, being human, they have ever had the itching to play the rôle of prophets.

Can anyone recall the spirit of philosophic hope that dawned in the world in the middle of the nineteenth century? There was to be a New Dispensation, an era of authentic truth, bringing in a new Religion of Science. We were grateful to the heralds of this light, and especially so for their bold destructive work in clearing away old blind windows. For a moment we felt a glow and believed that very important events were taking place in the history of thought. But the prophet-scientists have lived up to none of their prospectuses, and have left it for new forms of religious truth to rush in and fill the void which their scientific dogmas could not fill.

One would think that Science should have had something to say on the main interests of mankind — about which we know no more than we did in 1850. The truth seems to be that Science, which filled the air with so large a brag, is really a branch of domestic convenience, a department for the study of traction, cookery, and wiring. Science discredited the old thought-transference apparatus of art and literature, and was always about to install new ones of her own; yet she developed nothing but tickers. If her tickers speak music at all, it is only to reconvey the old wisdoms; for she has no language of her own that can give voice to the Spirit. And hence it comes that Science has said nothing of importance on the Latin question — or no more than the Academy of Plumbers can tell you about an opera.

Science in the meantime has had a bad influence on all forms of literary and artistic and moral criticism; for every critic has thought it his duty to say something final, — a truly absurd ambition in such matters, — and our literature has swarmed with little doctors very seriously using test tubes and making fever charts of religion and the fine arts.

The reason why Science is weak in these

particular fields of thought is that Science deals with externals. She cannot deal with the personal mystery that lies behind every act and thought of our lives, and which she is powerless to eliminate. Therefore, Modern Science has been barren of big views on human questions. Like Moses, she could not enter the Promised Land which she had prophesied. She broke the sacred tables too precipitately, and without the patience to guess what meanings their characters — lost upon her — might bear to later minds. She rejected the symbols so resolutely that she lost their import; and she remains to-day sitting upon a hill, while the intellect of the world marches past her.

If we have looked in vain toward Science for authoritative views on education, the reason is not far to seek. The education of the young has time out of mind formed a part of the religion of every age — with the Greeks, with the Romans, with the Jews; in mediæval times, in modern times. The Roman virtue and Roman piety, to which Horace owes half his charm and power, were implanted in him as part of his religious training. It was much more than a philosophy, or than a psychology: the discipline of the ages lay behind it. The same is true of that whole

system of education which modern Europe inherited from the Middle Ages, and which modern Science has been making a somewhat feeble effort to supersede.

The purpose of the early Roman Church was to civilize barbarians; and all the procedures which lie between stark dogma and a horde of half naked Franks were developed and operated like a mill, like a sheep-washing shed, a reformatory, a drill-ground. This impulse of a rubbing-down and Romanizing sort still rules the education of England, France, and America, however much its formulas may have changed with the lapse of time. The old Christian dispensation was effective. It was a thing of gradual growth, it maintained a discipline, its thoughts were enveloped and applied in a thousand practices. Its influence was complex, profound, softening. But this new dispensation of Science has nothing to offer to the schoolmaster save a box of tricks — some crude statements labeled Psychology. Our schools and universities have for years been running on the impetus of the old learning, and have been crying in vain for help from Science. And at last our educators are beginning to regard Science as a false prophet, and to be guided by their own private ideas and inner

light. It is a good sign; the inner light is what Science had forgotten. It is this light which relates us to the classic world, and to religion in all its forms: it is this light by which all education, whether pagan or Christian, is illumined.

Education in the old and true sense means acquaintance with the thousandfold gleaming symbols which the mind of man has left behind it in the past. These are the lenses, mirrors, reflectors, audiphones, and wireless alphabets which translate the forces that play about us into mind and emotion, and make us aware of what is going on in the universe. They always speak in the present tense, even though their language be obsolete and their substance antedate the Fall of Troy. What is a Bach fugue but a transcript of inscrutable metaphysical force, which can be approached or apprehended in no other way than through this difficult and recondite technique? Has the darting flame of it left the earth with Bach? No, it is here in the drawing-room.

You possess a fragment of Gothic iron-work: it has charm, personality: it sings, it whispers, it glows, it sleeps, it thinks. How did these faculties get into the iron? No one has ever found

out. The man that made the thing did not know; yet something behind and within him is talking to you to-day across your writing-desk. But your ear must know a little of his dialect to understand him; a mere smattering will do.

Education has always been a smattering, and the Grand Tour was never more than a hand-shake with Europe. Although the mysteries of art are fathomless, yet they are easily at hand. America is to-day full of business men who are good connoisseurs of Japanese porcelain, old engravings, pictures, and Jacobean furniture. These interests they have perhaps taken up late in life, and often out of mixed motives, of which vanity formed one. And yet so powerful is any sheer contact with the things of the mind that the objects themselves have educated those hard-headed old financiers, the bankers and brokers of America. We have had in America a deluge of second-hand furniture and decorative stuff, for which the palaces of the old world have been gutted. The deep, natural appeal made by the fine arts is the force that has drawn all this plunder to our shores. From the utilitarian point of view such things are as superfluous as the teaching of Latin and Greek. Your self-made man, if you ask his views on education,

will say that the mere cultivation of a knowledge of the past is misdirected energy. Yet see what he does himself when he gets the chance!

What circumstance is it that has caused these, the most utilitarian minds in the world, to value the past, to dote on old crafts, old silver, brocades, sword-hilts, snuffboxes? These horny amateurs have found themselves with leisure on their hands. No doubt there will be few poets among them; no doubt the commercial value of the wares they collect was needed, to edge their souls open to the spiritual meaning of their bibelots. But even so the meaning survives: it has peeped through. They have built up their new tastes at the expense of their own business ideals, in the teeth of their own beliefs about what is practical, and about the fatuity of the higher learning. They have discovered in life, however late, that the intellect is a source of happiness.

The whole of the higher education ought long ago to have been viewed as a question of the enjoyment of life. I believe that if it were treated in this way many important millionaires could be made to see the matter in a new light. It would be hard, of course, to make a Wall Street man believe that an ode could give the same sort

of pleasure as a celadon flowerpot, or that reading in a textbook which cost sixty-eight cents could furnish as deep an emotion as owning a first edition that was worth six hundred dollars and need not be read at all. Yet the idea might be an entering wedge — a wedge of light, forcing itself into the cranium of the magnates.

The old mirrors and pictures that fill the shop windows on Fifth Avenue, the tapestries, gilded columns, enameled shrines and carved virgins, are links which tie us to that historic imagination of the world of which literature is the soul.

It would be like poetic justice if sane views on education should make progress through the conversion of their worst enemy — the American business man; yet in so far as America is producing the amateur, she is producing the humanist. Leisure is the stuff that both are made of.

And now comes a truth that seems to be forgotten on this side of the Atlantic: the roots and origins of all æsthetic genius lie in letters. Literature is the spring and fountain of all the fine arts. Folklore, legend, theology are the plants of which these artistic splendors of the eye are the blossoms. The moment you approach any one of the flowers you are in the presence

of poetry and religion. Go into the first auction-room you pass and look at a bit of stained glass; and you must resort to Thomas Aquinas for its meaning. Do you think that man can produce a thing like a Rembrandt etching, unless he has been nourished on Saul and Job and Lazarus? Or that a Pompeian decoration does not depend upon Homer for its power? Classic art was the illustration of classic *thought;* the Renaissance was inspired by an enthusiasm for ancient *letters*. Otherwise it could never have absorbed the fine arts of Greece and Rome. Any decorative art that is grafted merely upon earlier decorative art can never come to splendor. It must be based also on the literature that is behind the earlier work. Otherwise it will be a mere rag hung on the shoulders of ignorance. The foundation of art schools and museums in America will accomplish but little unless the passion for letters comes to their rescue. Otherwise the movement will remain a mere dabbling in surfaces.

Fatigue and Unrest

Our impatience with the classics is part of a larger mood, which is somehow connected with industry and progress, somehow related to art and religion. The idea flung into life by Science, that man is responsible for his own destiny, has made men tense and nervous; it has overexcited the ambitions of the intellectual classes, whether in pure Science or in literature. Past history is studied assiduously and minutely; but it is studied didactically, for the sake of a thesis. The writers strive to docket the past, hold it down, and teach something over its dead body. Their temperament is recorded in books of criticism, which are among the best mirrors of the present age.

Of course scholars must always study the past; for what else is there to study? One cannot study the future. But the older, pre-Darwinian, nonspecializing writers were apt to be men of humanistic, artistic, or religious natures. To entertain the reader and to touch his feelings was a part of their province. Their works reflect the emotional life that was in the air they breathed.

Their very vehicles are restful, because action, as of waves, is in them. They cradle us in motion; and life is motion, and the only rest we can know is to be absorbed and soothed by motion. The modern sciences, however, such as anthropology, economics, psychology, sociology, and the schools of writing which they generate, do not treat either the past or the present with sympathy. They bid the past stand and deliver, and bid the public stand and swallow. They do not afford that spiritual relief which religion and the fine arts supply, and which humanity prizes above all else.

Nothing seems to survive the buffets of time except art and religion — in the extreme case, Psalms and torsos. We worship them the more, the less there is left of them. The recent critical epoch proves the point. Proud has been the scholar who could carry a shard to his den, or identify a Ligurian *primitif* through a panel found in Spain. He who could clap on the label was crowned. In the meantime, and while the wine-tasters were growing more exquisite in their appreciations, the vintages were growing worse. If one looks back over the past for a couple of generations, one cannot help seeing that there has been a change for the worse in letters,

and in most of the fine arts. Our new poems, novels, operas, and symphonies, are not so robust as they were in 1850; nor does the public look forward to them with such piety as our fathers. A new poem by Longfellow, a work by George Eliot or Victor Hugo — to say nothing of a Brahms symphony — was awaited with reverent expectation as a thing whose incubation was important, and whose future was to be perennial. To-day there is hardly a pause between the package and the wastepaper basket. Haste rules both composition and consumption.

I used to believe, when speculating on those mysterious conditions that give birth to poetry, that the mystery must be ruled by some conjunction of the planets, which drives the quills of the poets so fluently and pours out inspiration as fast as the supply of ink will permit. But now it appears to me that much the opposite is the case, and that the leisure which human conditions generate in the heart of the poet floats out and penetrates the empyrean, till all the starry places are filled with it.

Hurry was born the day that steam was invented; and though art and letters resisted the acceleration for a couple of generations, they succumbed at last, and are now whirling and

scurrying like ferryboats packed with wide-awake people holding watches in their hands. It is the slow pace of the older pictures, music, and fiction that so bores the futurists. They cannot bear the quietude, the heavy calm of Claude Lorrain, Beethoven, or Walter Scott. Quietude irritates — unless it be an artificial soft-pedal quietude, got in attempt to recover some ray of the old, unconscious leisure through astute simplifications and mannered archaism. The moderns manage with enormous effort to produce some effect which has been a mere accessory in the older work, and which it must be confessed is beautiful. They arrive at the ingenuous through ingenuity and at repose through pose.

This impulse toward preciosity is to be felt in the British Quatrocentists, in Walter Pater, in Maeterlinck. It seems to have come to a kind of little climax in the widespread passion for primitifs and the primitive. All this craving for "simplicity" recalls Marie Antoinette dressed as a milkmaid at the Petit Trianon. There is a touch of decadence in it, a touch of fatigue. Years ago Jean de Reszke remarked to one of his pupils, apropos of Debussy's music, "Yes, yes; but that music is for bored people; and I am not bored."

Let us contrast our own power of attention

with that of former days. Consider what leisure must have been at the disposal of the Greek burghers of Pisistratus' time, that they could sit through the recitation of a book of Homer; consider the still, monotonous prolixity of Plato, the dreamy quietness of Gray's "Elegy." Let somebody read ten pages of Chaucer before going on with this essay — or a chapter of *Tom Jones*, or of *Robinson Crusoe;* or a book of the *Faerie Queene;* or some long poem by Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Browning. What quality is it in these works that separates us so distinctly from all of them, both from those that are three thousand years old, and those that date from the day before yesterday? Why do we look with a kind of envy on a handsomely printed, well-bound book of 1820, over whose manufacture the slow clocks of the old handicrafts have ticked? Such a book, when seen casually on a friend's table, seems to furnish his whole house.

In the middle of the nineteenth century certain amateurs became aware of a gradual impoverishment that was creeping over all the handicrafts. They sought to remedy this by intensive cultivation, and to breathe artificial oxygen into the current handwork. Yet the older wall-papers remain more interesting, calmer, better

than even those made under the eye of William Morris. The truth is that art and letters speak a language that comes from behind the work, not from within it. What makes us happy in art and letters is the power in them that has been unconsciously absorbed by the artist, and is unconsciously conveyed to us by his work. For want of a better word, I have been using the idea of "leisure" to express the mystery. Leisure is a laic and secular word which points toward the gateway of spiritual truth, much as the word "contemplation," tinged as it is with religion, points in the same direction; and both of them imply receptivity, a reliance on some solution which shall swim into our minds without aid from us, a half-consciousness that our own faculties are part of the operations of Nature. This knack of a loose and dreamy attention seems to be lost to the world for the time being, and the loss prevents our seeing life in the enormous perspectives in which it really looms.

I suspect that a clue to the trouble is to be found in the phenomenon known to all painters, and described by Sir Joshua in his lectures — that the eye loses faculty if rigidly focused.

Contraction kills feeling, and feeling is a gift that must be spontaneous. Emotion is a fluid

that connects all the provinces of our being; and though we name one of them painting, another poetry, another religion, they are all interactive, and cannot be kept apart by bulkheads, or even intelligibly distinguished from one another. Does not everyone recognize the religious feeling in the *Pickwick Papers?* The quality that has preserved the tragic glory of the *Iliad* is the huge, enveloping piety behind it. The ground swell of emotion in the *Iliad* is very different from the human sentiment of "Pickwick"; yet the glow in both books comes from the depths of a pervading reverence.

Our contemporaries are not in sympathy with the gentleness and largeness of the elder time. Their tensions require tension; their nervousness, an edge. Our novelists, dramatists, painters, have been hardening their voices and sharpening their pencils. They regard nature and human nature with a cold, deliberate, intellectual eye. A jaded palate calls for pickles. Ibsen, Bernard Shaw, Henry James, and George Moore — nay the whole band of caterers to what used to be relaxation, have become acidulated and bitter prophets of something that is serious and clever. The overtones are lost, the technique is tortured. The wizards of the day tell us that all

these signs of fatigue are precursors of a new burst of genius. "Was not Beethoven misunderstood at first? Then why not Schomberg? You do not like Cézanne and Gauguin? Wait, my friend, you are an *arrièré*, a left-over. Pray remove your hat. You admit that we have a new age: then why not a new art? If Mozart had known the typewriter and the auto he would have written music something like ours. The world can never go backward; nor should one give Miss Edgeworth's *Moral Tales* to a child of the movies. We have as good a right to think that our art is great as had any other age."

All such talk is founded on a dogma, a shibboleth of semiscientific origin, to the effect that *art must come*. The historic fact is that art is shy, and seldom comes at all; and when it does come it is founded on folklore, tradition, and a reverence for the past. Your autos and your typewriters signify little. The spinning wheel goes out of fashion; but the song that was sung to it inspires the great master two hundred years later. We build theatres of iron instead of stone; but our pilasters and decorations hark back to the temples of the Nile. Where splendor and decoration are concerned, we run to the old properties as children to the toy-closet. The worst

augury for futurism is that it looks toward the future, and patronizes the past; whereas the votaries of every art that has come to greatness have always worshiped the past. They have claimed and reclaimed the treasures of experience and technique which lie buried in all the great works of the world, which exist nowhere else, and which poets and painters rediscover as their natural inheritance, rejoice in, and reissue to mankind in new deliverances of human feeling.

Our art talk to-day is small talk. The humanists of the Renaissance envisaged the classics *en bloc* as a refining influence. They saw scholarship as an advance guard that was to occupy and possess a kingdom whose spoils were for all. Ideas, arts, crafts, amusements, manners, were to sift down from scholarship, through the hordes of modern, half-savage invaders, till everyone was vitalized. Shakespeare puts in a phrase the whole spirit of the Renaissance, when he says, —

> . . . The books, the arts, the academes
> That show, contain and nourish all the world.

In nothing did the Cinque Cento show its mental grasp and the bigness of its nature more than in thus seizing upon Greece and Rome as a single

influence, which was to inspire not only the mind but the character of the moderns. Sir Philip Sidney, with his enthusiasm, with the nobility of his private life, and with the dazzling apotheosis that followed an early death, did more for the advancement of arts and letters in England than the foundation of half a dozen colleges.

The Two Languages

The distinction between Science and Faith can be felt in the words themselves. Science means self-help. Faith relies on the unseen. The biggest thunderclap that ever issued from a collision between these two modes of force was the collapse of the German Empire. This climax in the twentieth century has dramatized for us the whole of the nineteenth; and has made us see that there really was an explosion point to which the opposing tendencies had been building up, and after which a reaction was inevitable.

There are indeed two ways of using our faculties, and they have given rise to two great historic languages, the language of Science in all its forms (for its forms are all related to one another and lead into one another), and the language of the instinctive emotional life of man in all its forms (for they too are all related and lead into one another).

The old familiar words, "actual" and "ideal," which have been in vogue since Plato's time, give a good notion of the two portions into which our experience seems to divide itself. The

actual world is that part of life that can be identified and talked of without fear of a misunderstanding. The ideal world consists of emotions which we feel vaguely and strive to account for. You may speak of one world as the visible and of the other as the invisible if you choose. The exact sciences deal with the first; religion, poetry, philosophy, and every form of art, deal with the second. Although the attempts to connect these two worlds by strict logic have always failed, the two realms are interlocked in nature and are felt to be parts of each other. It is as impossible to separate them through any process of logic as it is to connect them.

It is to be noted that these two worlds are not coördinate; for the exact sciences deal with specific departments of life; religion, poetry, and so forth deal with life as a totality. Every scientist is a man, and his science is surrounded with a nimbus of something which is not science and which he cannot shake off. Thus "Science," as an abstraction, merges itself in the ideal world.

As to the invisible, it is strange how many are the forms of idealism, and how each of them suffices to anchor the individual in a sky which he cannot describe. There is the fortitude of the Stoic, the rapture of the saint, the *noblesse oblige*

of a tradition. There are all the dogmas, and all the proverbial wisdoms. Any symbol of heroism, the sight of beauty in any form, the appeal made by childhood, catch us up as we pass by, and hold us as with strong cables; yet no one can plot the geography of these Elysian Fields, or do more than point out in which direction they lie. The great poets and thinkers of the world, the artists, musicians, and novelists, connect us for a moment with these hovering metaphysical regions, touching our hearts most when they play gently, and somehow making us penetrable to the surrounding forces and infinite musical impulsions that are in the air.

The language of the spirit is divided into various dialects and vehicles, which are made up, one might say, of nothing at all: of words, phrases, sounds, rays of light — things as delicate as gossamer, and unseizable by volition; which have formed themselves into alphabets under a process to which man has submitted, but which he has not controlled; which he accepts, but never completely understands. He is its victim. Nevertheless, those dialects and vehicles have an exactitude and a psychological precision of their own. They cleave and clarify the mind like chemical reagents. They control vision.

The fact is that what men see in the external world depends on what they have read, heard said, seen painted, and mused upon. The great monuments of human thought stand over man, and strike a glow into each generation as it passes. They keep the wit of man alive; and besides the great ones, the world is full of incomplete shafts and columns of the mind, — histories, tales, fables, songs, memories, — the corals on which wisdom cuts its teeth.

Yesterday I passed in the street a very superior little schoolgirl who was reading as she walked along. The book was Miss Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. It is certain that the girl's whole mental outlook will be qualified by the story. She will have newer eyes at the end of the block. Indeed, all that men call cultivation is a magnifying glass for looking into things that are about us. If you pause for half an hour and examine Japanese woodcuts in a shop window, your eyes begin to see hints of the Orient everywhere. Conversely, if you pass a Puritan banker, or a Roman ecclesiastic, you will not truly see the man, he will be to you an empty shadow, unless you look by the light of religious feeling, thought, meditation, experience, sympathy, imagination. Religious feeling is

evoked by a thousand influences that are not called by the name of religion. There is a little religious truth in anything that moves us. Every art is full of it. The arts are sounding boards that stand behind us as we listen; shade trees that bend above us as we look. They are reverberators and enlarge our naked powers. And what profounder prayer can a man make — or *wish*, if he be an atheist — than to see things as they are.

The ceaseless unwindings of our thought, of attention and inattention, consciousness and unconsciousness, go forward in us like the beating of cloth under a fuller's hammer. As we grow wiser we become more obedient, responsive, elastic, vibrant, vital; and this inner sensitiveness shows in an outer quietude. This is so clearly a commonplace that the brown study of any ordinary person exactly resembles the ecstasy of a saint. The so-called mystics of the world are men whose minds have become focalized on certain inner experiences; but really, every man is a mystic in his ordinary conversation and conduct. He is obliged to be such in order to survive or to succeed. He is governed at every movement by instinct, by irreducible intimations and whispers of thought.

All the arts of expression, no matter in what condition of decay they may be found, are jumbles and fragments of inexpugnable mysticism. The comedian who enacts the stage tramp has caught a glimpse of life from a new angle, which delights and refreshes us. He has seen it with the tail of his eye *en passant*. Men quarrel only as to the form of statement which shall account for the authority of those inner monitors whose eyes rest upon the eyes of the thinker and subdue him.

The old philosophies made many endeavors to explore man's conscience and pluck out the heart of his mystery; and they have left many sayings, tales, and arguments that make a poetic appeal to us, but nothing that amounts to a clear demonstration. There used to be a function called Reason, which was supposed to exist in the mind; but no one could say where it began or ended. It was a mercurial element. It would leap from a tale or an epigram, course about like a dolphin round a ship, shed gleams of light, perhaps, and then disappear. It was always more like a mythological animal than a domestic one, and very often it had to be suppressed or banished when the most serious matters were decided. In fact Reason always bore traces of its origin, which

was that of a greyhound following a course. The old Latin and Romance words, *cursum*, *discorso*, *discours*, — Hamlet's "discourse of reason," — show the creature's lineage. Reason was always in its essence a mere running-about.

The philosophers fixed on this most unreliable animal as a faculty of the mind — that faculty by which man understands the mind of God. The dog served in this capacity for a great many hundred years, and indeed down to the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when philosophers ceased to talk about God, and all the old servants were dismissed. Reason faded into rationalism. The Age of Science had, meanwhile, been thinking and talking about the things that could be fixed and identified, or at least which seemed to be fixable and subject to identification. That was the Scientific Age, which I have spoken of as having failed to throw any light on the spiritual interests of the world.

That age had a quite definite beginning. It began in Lord Bacon's time; and yet Lord Bacon was neither a scientist of importance nor a philosopher of note. He was a prophet and a propagandist of the first order. Although his own education was mediæval, legal, and tinged with scholastic dogmatism, he had the passion

for antiquity of the Renaissance. Although he shared the miscellaneous poetic wit of the Elizabethans, he was obsessed all his life by one single idea — the need of scientific experiment. "Interrogate Nature!" was his war cry. "Interrogate Nature!" He expressed this idea in books, pamphlets, and allegories which are monuments of effective literary power. The age which he predicted actually set in, and has lasted down to our own day. That age very early adopted him as its prophet. Science had found her spokesman. Bacon, as he says of himself, did no more than ring a bell to call men to a circle. The music and the power of his voice came from the old bell-metal of the classics; but his purpose was utilitarian.

As the different branches of modern science came to be studied during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they, of course, developed idioms of their own — mathematical, physical, chemical conceptions and technical terms. The old theology hung over the whole campaign for a century or two, and even those men who were pushing the philosophic and psychological end of the movement spoke freely about God; though in France the term was early softened into *l'Être suprême*. After Kant's time, however,

the use of popular language in the discussion of metaphysical problems was felt to be full of danger; and the attempt was quite ingenuously made, by the cleverest kind of men, to develop a technique of scientific terms in order to express mental realities — in other words, to drop the use of metaphor. This is the attempt which is to-day meeting its Waterloo. It was a conscientious endeavor to banish the vernacular from the study of moral and religious truth.

Science after Darwin's time was seized with a fever of world conquest: its language must dominate. In correct circles it became bad form to use any word that was tinged with theology. New words were invented: modern psychology was developed. Even the good old word "metaphysic" was to be used with caution: it implied one knew not what of things outworn. The word "God" was, of course, taboo, unfair and incorrect, a boorish survival. The word affected the serious philosophers of 1880 much as the courtiers of Louis XIII's anteroom were affected by some provincialism uttered by a rustic nobleman. One might refer to God with an introductory "as Pascal says," or with a smile, or in fact with some slight gesture that kept up the *bon ton* of the discussion; but never simply as God.

Now, many of these gentlemen philosophers were really thinking about God all the time, and were endeavoring to steal a march on Him, and demonstrate that his power was at work in the midst of their own preciosity. Both William James and Bergson showed that some disturbing force was at play in the midst of their little séance, a force which *might* — which seemed — But they were far too serious psychologists to go further than that.

The word God is merely a convenient sample of the discard in the modern game of the psychologists. "God" is vague; but "veridical," "subliminal" (which is *not* derived from sublime), "autosuggestive," and a thousand other pet words, are clean surgical concepts which can be passed through a hydrogen flame before using. How can one ever get a professional scientist to understand that the art of writing — any kind of writing, even psychology — consists in using symbols that are cloudy and fluid, as words must be, to express ideas that are clean-cut, powerful, and unforgettable? The best psychology — which is never called psychology — uses words in their ordinary senses, and is to be found in, for example, Shakespeare's plays. Herbert Spencer, on the other hand, invented

and patented a jargon of his own into which he translated everything he could think of; and if anyone wishes to know what the psychology of to-day will sound like twenty years hence, let him take down a volume of Spencer's *Synthetic Philosophy*. Into such an abracadabra as this had the noble language of Bacon been converted by degrees, and in the process of obeying his own injunction, "Interrogate Nature!"

The invasion of the fine art of writing by the cant terms of Science (especially those of psychology) went forward in the nineteenth century abreast of the decay in the old faiths, till a clear demonstration was made that, whatever religion might be (if there were such a thing), it was not expressible in the language of Science. Methods of accurate research had recorded a zero. Science had imprisoned the soul in a sense of responsibility for its own destiny; but Science could find no exit.

At the very zenith of the triumph of Science, in and about the seventies, and in the most ignorant portion of the educated world, — that is, in the United States, — new forms of religion began to appear. They sprang out of individual discoveries of truth, and clustered themselves into groups, societies, centres — at times loosely

organized, at times rigid and militant, always tending to split into newer camps that gave rise to heresies and to still more varieties of belief. The sects were apt to take names that appealed to the prejudices of the age and suggested that their truth was new and yet old; scientific and yet Christian; hygienic and spiritual; combining the utmost obscurity of statement with the most positive practical results. The two best-known titles, one of which stands for the largest single church, and the other as the best-known description of the whole movement (including thousands of straggling adherents to it), are Christian Science and New Thought.

Most of these new religions, perhaps all of them, arose out of some first-hand private tragedy, grief, disease, or nervous disorder, self-cured, without a doctor, without a church — but not without God. The new forms of religion had this in common with the old, that they focalized the attention of the worshiper upon some supersensuous abstraction and thereby filled him with power. The divining rods were of strange shapes, but they reached the waters. Disfigured as many of these faiths were by the frailties that all religion is heir to, by faults of taste, by commercialism, by egoism, by charlatanism, by

occasional tyranny and malpractice, they were nevertheless antitypal to contemporary Science, because they *relied on the invisible*. They represented a crude but enormous atmospheric reaction against the imprisoning, close-hauled scientific attitude of mind, which was suffocating the churches, bullying the thinkers, and which kept proclaiming that man must understand each step in his destiny.

The new sectarians and their prophets were generally self-educated persons on whose minds the old Hebrew texts fell like lightning upon fireworks. Sometimes a man or woman would browse in Genesis or Revelation, in St. Paul or St. John; and, having ingeniously fitted together an image of his thought, expressed by a conjunction of Scripture phrases, — often connected together in a way that to rational scholars seemed meaningless, but which to the discoverer was divinity, — he would reach out with his doctrine toward his fellow men. The whole movement was a return to quietism and self-delivery to God. It was through such rifts, cracks, and jagged holes in the roof of the prison that a hurricane of the spirit tore and blasted its way back into humanity. A signpost should be set up to mark the spot of its entry — I had almost

said — with a cross ; but many of these new forms of religion were not touched with the humility which a cross would signify. Some of them relied on the invisible as it were temporarily, and as a means to an end, the ends being success, peace of mind, and comfort — the very things which the greatest men have often lived without.

All the new discoveries were grafted on the Bible. Our whole land is to-day honeycombed with the influence of men and women who read the Bible. Perhaps the hideous visibility of modern materialism and its gross power have opened the inward eyes of men to the meaning of these mystical writings in a way that has not been possible since the days when the hideous materialism of ancient Rome prepared the early Christians to receive the invisible teaching of Christ. And here let us pause for a moment and watch the glowing shadow of the Christian religion as it passes across the face of our civilization. I began this essay by talking about books and bookishness, and the influences of humanism in its larger sense ; and the discussion has led us to the Bible, which is the best example we have to show the importance of reading and writing in human life. The Bible is a luminous congregation of vapors, a cloud by day and a pillar

of fire by night; and the darker the skies grow, whether above an epoch or an individual, the more light it emits. Of all the media of communication between man and man, the Bible is the greatest mind-touching influence that swallows us unto union with God and with all men, dispelling the crass illusions of the moment, leading us to rely on the unseen.

The strange thing about our late scientific criticism of religion was that it should have sought to penetrate the mysteries of religious power by a study of dogmas or documents, instead of laying hold of the subject dynamically and mastering its mother tongue. If the scholars could only have laid aside their critical spectacles and read the Scriptures with the natural eye! This is what the common people were now doing. The ancient Hebrews lived in such intense consciousness of God that almost every word they said, whether good or ill, recorded their faith, not as a doctrine but as an emotion. The consequence is that almost any word of the Bible records a personal fervor, a first-hand experience. It is then no wonder that any two texts may be brought together and the fire found between them. The searchers for truth found their repose in the texts. However favorite

phrases and formulas might vary, all the worshipers had one experience in common: they felt themselves to be the agents of a Power not themselves, — yet themselves, — which gave them peace.

These metaphysical persons themselves were but the spear-point of a vast, many-sided movement — the starting up of ten thousand forms of rest and relaxation. All these remedies were religious in their nature and influence, though their terms and modes of action were a jumble of science, occultism, pious fraud — in fact of anything in heaven or earth that would divert the patient's mind from himself and give the powers of life a chance to reoccupy him. They came in answer to the fatigues of the world.

To men who are suffering a nascent consciousness of God's presence, the Bible burns like the bush seen by Moses. The spark jumps and relates itself to an inner live wire which has been buried in the core of the new worshiper, and which grows incandescent and forthwith begins to vitalize the rest of his consciousness. No psychic analysis can reach this process any more than it can expound the effect of music or of a Greek cornice. A process of life has responded to a stimulus; but it will not respond till the

hour strikes. The consciousness of God is normally concealed from us by the plenitude of our interests, by all the sights and sounds that so vividly besiege us, and which for some reason — I know not what or how — convince us that we are original forces, self-sustaining fountains of life. The average man gets no inkling that all his power is being supplied to him, till through some overdraft, some expenditure beyond the supply, a draining of the cistern, he finds himself flat on his back in an illness. So long as he is able to move about and shift his attention, he can keep up the illusion of an inherent spontaneousness. But when he is utterly prostrate and thinks he must die, a stillness descends on him, a stillness which is a part of nature and comes as a true sequence of cause and effect. And now he begins to feel the trickling in of life from its source. It is by some such experience that the consciousness of God has so frequently come to men in all ages. "The Lord is my shepherd" lies near the bottom of a well where the water is low.

To demand why it is that any particular man begins to be conscious of God is to ask too much of the Sphinx. We can never know what profound law may lurk beneath the appearance of

those monks and anchorites who court silence, and are found living in caves toward the end of periods where doubt, luxury, and intellectual bedlam reign in the outer, civilized world. Such persons are apt to be the forerunners of newer and healthier epochs. To the casual eye they seem to be merely getting away from the hubbub; but to the eye of mind they are rediscovering the nature of life. Their effectiveness is proverbial; for they have found the herb that every one is in need of. Sometimes it is wormwood, sometimes moly, now rue, and now balsam; but it is always a natural product, the antitoxin of the age.

The new American mysticism, for all its eccentricities, dropped an anchor for a generation that had been living in continuous flotation; and being at anchor, the waves of life began to play against the souls of that generation, and beat them into faith. The breakdown of the older ecclesiastical authorities proved a blessing. All the barriers, the interpretations, the shopworn catechisms, the churchy miasmas of many centuries, had been blown away, and the bare text of the New Testament began to convert a generation and to bring them rest. The new faith was purest in the most humble, as has been the case

with all Christian revivals. I suppose that new spiritual light in circling the globe cannot get in elsewhere, for it finds itself walled out by cut and dried ideas, interests, and occupations. Only the humble are exposed to it: they are unexpressed, and it expresses them. At any rate there exist to-day in our midst, and in no small numbers, such persons as the Middle Ages made their saints of. To have known a single one of them is enough to qualify a lifetime. Their influence is invading the churches simply because it is invading everything. Perhaps we should look on them simply as the visible members — fire-points of a new dispensation which is at ferment in all minds and radiates as a unity.

This Biblical influence — I call it so for convenience: let another name it more accurately if he can — has of late been assailing Science in her own stronghold. It creeps in unrecognized, passing the doorkeepers, giving secret signs to confederates — those spies of God who have posts in the temples of Science. Like most new forms of religion it arose in obscure places and oozed upward through unknown people. Though the churches and universities were at first immune to it, there was one field of organized work where its influence found early entry — that of

medicine. Religion and Science meet on the field of hygiene, and hence the new ideas about life have been pouring into our hospitals and asylums. To-day no first-rate practitioner will tell you as a finality what is the matter with you, or what will cure you. A respect for the mystery of sickness is on every brow. The spiritual condition of the patient is the first thing that every good doctor thinks of. The divine nature of healing is in the air.

The Story and Sayings of Christ

The Gospels themselves were always the central, radiative power of the Christian Church. For many centuries after the Dark Ages their influence reached the people only at second hand; yet all the good that was wrought on the common people came from the teaching of men who were immersed in the Gospels. Had the primitive Gospels been lost, had the Christian Church been obliged to run on the momentum of its own ritual, dogma, and propaganda, the whole fabric would, within a century or two, have tumbled together in a heap of dust, myth, barbarism, and insignificance.

Those wonderful sayings of Christ come to us as they came to Christ himself — uninterrupted by intention. In his[1] conduct and daily life he seems to have lived from moment to moment, not certain what step he was next to take. He

[1] Note. — In my MS. I had followed the usage of the Bible, and had avoided capitals in the case of pronouns when Christ was referred to. The stenographer, however, replaced my small *h*'s with large ones throughout. With apologies to him and to modern custom I reinstate the small ones. — J. J. C.

drifts down the village street, comes across a friend or a wedding, a truth-seeker or a casuist, a sick man, an unknown woman in grief. Apparently he is the sport of invisible powers; and yet at every moment he is the same. At every moment he is seen, as it were, just dissolving into the will of God. His words and his actions appeal to some identity in us with a kind of whirring power, as of a big flywheel — not as speculation, but as an immediate experience. They operate upon something in us that is below the cortex. They tell us that we, too, are imprisoned in the running currents of the universe; we cannot get out. The lesson of the New Testament is, Submit, give way — assist not, protest not, save not. And these ideas are conveyed not merely in words, but by the thing itself. One would never have thought that the mind had so much power over the body as herein appears. Men are reorganized and set in tune by their passing reflections about Christ. We examine past ages by the gleam of this mirror, and we unravel daily problems by it. Turn the light of it upon local politics and it gives you an analysis; upon international matters, and it at least suggests a clue. But its responses are personal, and not academic. It will not give you an

answer about to-morrow, or about someone else. The determination of men to fetch out of Christ an answer about someone else, or about to-morrow, is what brings in the crimes of Christianity. The present moment is all that the mirror will illumine, turn it which way we will.

The effect of Christ's words is to soothe those contractions of the will and attention — of the viscera and subconsciousness — which make us inaccessible to omnipresent force. Now the waking sleep of faith, whether of an instant or of an hour, is no more miraculous than natural sleep. This faculty, this dip into rest, is perhaps what Christ referred to when he said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light," and "Except ye . . . become as little children." It might without irreverence be termed a knack — the knack of dissolving into indifference to all consequences, whether personal or universal.

Pause is religion. It hovers over all men at all times and Christianity does no more than discover and expound, exhibit and assist it into the world. The ten thousand volumes written about the New Testament, the thousands of rituals, the millions of services, the unimaginable secret influences of Christ upon individuals everywhere, are the instrumentations of the pause

in life which Christ's teachings bring into the world. They hold up a finger and bid men cease trying to control their own destiny. Through this pause and arrestation men's hearts are transmuted into something that is both personal feeling and universal thought.

For many centuries Christianity was thought of as an organization, and its truths as doctrines. To-day we receive it more simply as an interpretation of life to the individual: each man drinks at the fountainhead. Our New Thought people, for all their quaintness and eccentricities of language, have done a great service; for they have rediscovered the fact that spiritual truths are expressed by paradox, and even by apparent nonsense. These quiet thinkers, mystics, and prayerful natures who move in our midst, have been keying our ears down to many noiseless deliverances of power. They prepare us to understand the paradoxes of the New Testament.

In Nature herself there is, of course, no paradox. The paradoxes exist only in the human symbols. The reason for them is that man is nothing positive in himself, but is the creature of a Power behind him. If you would express his relation to that Power in terms of man, you must do it by negations, as, for instance, man's

strength is weakness; his very identity is an illusion; his intentions act as interferences; his will is an impediment; his life is enlarged by sacrifice of intention, his power by nonresistance. Through relinquishment he becomes effective. The fiercest, most overwhelming and monumental example of the paradox lies in the history of Christ himself, who, through acts of submission to God and words of absolute surrender and concession, liberated the most subversive force that has ever been known in human life.

All of Christ's sayings allude to the same fact in nature. There is only one puzzle in the entire matter; but the coruscations and irradiations of it are seen in everything human, and especially in all of man's attempts to tell the truth. It is as if we were creatures in a looking-glass, and were obliged in our serious inscriptions to write from right to left. So deep was the Hebrew instinct for reversing the face of nature, that in the most remarkable passage of the Old Testament, where the coming Redeemer is described as of a nature completely passive, Isaiah puts his tremendous prophecy in the form of an historic statement: he views it as an event in the past — and thereby gains an inconceivable

rhetorical force. If a thing *is to be*, thinks Isaiah, it already *has been*, in the mind of God. The Old Testament is full of bold enigmas of the same sort: The race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong; The low shall be exalted and the high abased; The lion shall eat straw like the ox; The barren woman shall become the mother of children; The desert shall blossom like the rose; The dry bones shall live; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head stone of the corner. All of these expressions allude to the same truth, which is ever so stated as to keep the other aspect of it in view — namely the power of God.

When a man resists not evil, but refers it to God, this does not mean that the evil is not resisted, but that the man summons a power within him which resists the evil for him. You may change or omit the last word, and express the whole Bible. Resist not evil, resist not thought, resist not suffering, resist not passion or appetite — Resist not. This is the whole of the law and the prophets; and most of Christ's sayings make allusion to it.

Purpose is error. The more freely we let the mariner's needle swing, the more closely will it point to our true purpose. "Which of you

by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" "Swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither . . . by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black." The idea of an oath presupposes a kind of fulcrum in man's will, which is offensive to Christ — as if the rod should lift itself up against him that shaketh it.

All these metaphors represent the clearest thought that has ever been bestowed upon the nature of our life. The thought is remorselessly identical in meaning always; but so varied in figure that men are led to the centre of it by a thousand personal paths. That centre is an absolute quiescence, and the discovery of love.

"If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him." Here is an appeal to the crushing sense of love and helplessness which parents experience toward their children — a profound and mysterious experience, yet widespread and commonplace. Christ touches on this fact in nature lightly, and by a passing reference. It is a thing which the most hardened can understand — the commission of one's children

to the invisible — pagans do it. The words evoke a memory that conveys Christ's idea.

The most obvious thing about Christ's remarks is their casual nature. They are wafted past us. The student of religion cannot catch them, because he is a student. He wishes to impound and dissect them. He wishes to emphasize them; and they cannot be emphasized. Their relation to each other cannot be understood; because each is a totality, and the same totality. They can be related only by being superposed, one upon the other.

Their influence rises and grows of itself and builds itself into a sort of temple within men. I think that Christianity persists because men reflect on Christ at odd moments. He intrudes. He is more than a collection of proverbs, because of his centrality, and the lightning in him.

His sayings are the words of one who retained consciousness in a region where we lose consciousness. It is just above us, and out of reach — a point toward which wisdom converges. His words are let loose like birds. They differ from the old Hebrew teaching in being more personal. "I am the Lord thy God" becomes "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord" becomes

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . . ye have done it unto me." Almost his last words to his disciples were the most personal of all: "Feed my sheep."

Knock and it shall be opened unto you: Seek and ye shall find: Ask and it shall be given unto you. This injunction goes to the very bottom of our functional life — contraction, relaxation; work, rest. It is stated as a religious truth with man asking and God giving; but it is a universal metaphysical truth, and one of the profoundest things ever said in psychology. You must have wished; you must have striven; you must have held on with intensity. But you must let go. The memory of this saying will help you in teaching a child to read. His effort must not be continuous, but spasmodic. Newton refers to the law in telling of the way his own mind worked upon its problems: he filled his thought with a problem and then put it off his mind, and the next morning the solution came of itself. The law reaches back and is operative in these regions of union and disunion between individuals which are beyond our conception — in the sky as it were. You have exhausted yourself in a campaign to expound something to a friend — so much depends on it. At last you give up the

game, not as one who despairs, but as one who has shot his bolt. You have told your friend nothing about your intention to drop the struggle: it was in his absence that the idea occurred to you of withdrawing the opposition of your will to his. The next day he greets you as one convinced. He has followed your example, he has surrendered, he has seen your point.

All of Christ's sayings deal with those spheres of unimaginable influence by which we are surrounded, in which we move. Our intellect can never grasp them; it is by the surrender of a purpose that we use these spheres — say rather are used by them. All the sayings tend to set free power dimly guessed at by other thinkers, but which Christ seems to have seen plainly. He uses metaphors so picturesque that they haunt the mind, so true to every form in which the forces show themselves that our thought is insensibly extended, ensnared, enmeshed, in the infinite. His short phrases strike like bell-shocks upon the tremulous universe.

Knock and it shall be opened unto you. Of our two primal states of mind, — tension and relaxation, — the second is the hard one to learn. Anyone can close his fist; frowning comes by nature; but to give up a pet idea requires an

appeal to the supernatural. The world is made up of people with fixed eyes pulling at tillers, sighting lighthouses, and steering like mad things. All our interests conspire to intensify us, focalize us, limit us; and the joy of that region just above our comprehension and of which we cannot draw the plan, is the joy which the saints are always proclaiming. The saints, to be sure, are apt to be a little too clever, and want to annex the country to their own parish; but the celestial land exists nevertheless, and is as near to us as it was to them.

That freedom from all the tensions of the world, which the sages at all periods have sought in seclusion and contemplation, and which certain effete writers find in parlor hedonism and theories of beauty, has always been sought for also in short cuts, as, for instance, by persons who drink, or eat opium, and who thus gain a refuge, or temporary false peace that passes understanding. Such persons are hard to reach with the taste of the true peace; and yet not more hard to reach than those men of intellectual endowment who are bent upon practical work in some field which they have plotted out for themselves, whether it be the building of a railroad or the establishment of a theory of im-

mortality. Amid the interests, ambitions, and passions of life it is all but impossible to retain an absolute and relaxed skepticism as to the terms and tickets of one's own thought. Of course it is hard for the wise and prudent to set a value on that Cloud of the Unknowing which is seen by the saint. Wisdom and prudence come between them and it; and of course the cloud is visible to babes and sucklings; for they see nothing else.

In so far as the visible universe begins to dissolve under our contemplation, some of our pet interests and belongings begin to disappear, as if they were being foreclosed under a mortgage. Then we lay hold of the furniture. Babes and sucklings have no furniture. One thing is needful, said Christ. This is true; and this one thing involves the jettison of everything else.

We cannot but suppose that Christ knew how to write, and he had the example of the prophets and psalmists for hymns and letters; yet it is hard to imagine that he ever wrote a letter. His sayings, prayers, and sermons seem to be not so much a part of literature as a part of conduct; and this is why they affect conduct, and why they can receive a full meaning and be reëxpressed only through conduct. There is a nat-

ural law of influence among men, according to which behavior affects behavior; speech, speech; writing, writing; and so on. We know, for instance, how easily children are governed by example, and how hardly by precept. Everyone knows the best way to get a half-grown boy to fill the wood-box. The method is expensive of personal energy — an heroic method.

But the hero in this world not only stimulates heroism in others; he excites speech and writing of all sorts, and Christ's example has excited more speech and more writing than has anything else in the world; and this, combined with the depth, wit, and accuracy of his words, has given rise to all the speculations, rhapsodies, ethical talk, theology, and poems of Christianity. Such things are the true fruits of his doctrine; but they are not the doctrine. They are the work of men who are attempting to do what Christ himself did not try to do, that is, express himself in coherent literary form. Such a vehicle will not carry him. His ideas are sparks sent out from a central fire. This fire he communicated to his followers, and it has never been lost. The flame is so identified with his story and his utterances that it burns in men's hearts as a living personality, a consciousness of Christ as the centrality

of themselves, the focus of life—not merely of their own, but of all human life. Christ exists for them as a fiery pathway through the Universe, connecting man with man.

The line of demarcation between the Gospels and the rest of Christianity is clear enough. All the expounders of Christ, beginning with Saint Paul, want to say a little more than they know, or than is known. There exists, for instance, a certain conscious union with God, a thing that comes and goes and is the heart of religion. The early Christians called this *grace;* the Fathers defined it; the Church patented it; the theologians developed it; the politicians organized it; the saints and mystics dramatized it. I suppose that the literature and history of the subject would fill a library. Yet what Christ said about the subject was — "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

So also, in his visit to Martha and Mary, Christ's words to Mary, that she had chosen the "good" part, suggest the value of pure, silent devotion in much the same way as, at a later time, he justified the breaking of the box of

ointment. In both cases it is the sentiment of women that is in question. Now think what monstrous piles of books have been printed about Martha and Mary as types of the "active" and the "contemplative" life, what treatises on the art of contemplation, what compendiums of ignorant knowingness! Yet nothing more is really known to-day about this whole subject than one gets from Christ's phrase, "Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."

I can never say the Lord's Prayer without a fresh surprise. One would have expected something about the knowledge of God, love of men, spread of the gospel, progress, service, or feeling. But no: the Lord's Prayer is sobering, prosaic, self-extinguishing. It asks for bread for the day only, and deliverance from evil — without a hint as to what evil is, except that somehow evil implies hard feelings toward other men. By the first words of the prayer all men are dissolved into a unity: Christ himself does not appear in it. Here indeed is a slowing-down of religious enthusiasms, ethical movements, ecstatic visions, emotionalism, cleverness, ambition — and a becoming as little children, which is all but insulting to the adult intelligence.

So this is what is left in the innermost dungeon and prison of life — Evil; and we cannot deliver ourselves from it! We do not know what it is; yet it diminishes upon our cry to God for help. The Lord's Prayer is but another expression of the same truth that is in all of Christ's sayings.

Nothing more is known about evil than appears in the Lord's Prayer. There have been many attempts to define evil: codes of self-perfection, confessionals, analyses of sin, grades of penance, and so forth; and all of them turn men's eyes inward. Their tendency is unhealthy and at war with the nature of life.

It would seem, as I have said, that "evil" is connected with hostile feeling toward others, and that this is so universal a frame of mind that a universal prayer must deal with it. The quaint language of "trespass" and forgiveness, and the three parties involved — God, ourselves, and other men — are all so woven together in the prayer that they make one single thought: Forgiveness of injury is love of God, penance, and absolution all in one.

There is an aspect of this question of evil which is revealed to us very slowly, and as the result of effort and experience. We are sur-

rounded by evil: it is the most visible part of human nature. And yet, try how we will, we cannot touch or reach it in others. The only place where we are in true contact with evil is in the trembling rays of shadow that penetrate our own souls.

Faith, as Christ uses the word, is another name for nonresistance, for love, humility, negativity, immediate submergence in the surrounding Power. Faith means the acceptance of the next thing as being the important thing. If a man ask you to go with him a mile, go with him twain. Your own business, thoughts, or desires are of no moment or account. Perhaps they are to be found in those of the man.

Let the dead bury their dead. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Let the tares grow with the wheat. Ye are of more worth than many sparrows. The hairs of your head are numbered. Now is the time appointed. — All of Christ's phrases fall upon the very nerve and joint of the passing hour. They are always applicable. They flow in between our mind and its purposes as part of an ethereal current that relaxes the will and makes atmosphere for our vision — softening, enlarging, delaying, vitalizing every process of life. This is the balm of a

wisdom so supernal that we cannot receive it as a system. It must reach us as occasion gives it entrance, being poured over us continually as from a moving cloud.

Among Christ's words are certain dry observations which are overpoweringly intellectual, as, for instance, "To him that hath shall be given." He said this in connection with the higher learning and in defense of parables, which in Hebrew times were regarded as part of the higher learning. If this phrase — to him that hath shall be given — could but be understood in our country, it would cure a misconception which amounts to a blight, namely, the idea that whatever you do must be done wholesale. "How many will your movement reach?" is the first question that the business man asks of the philanthropist. This puts an end to the higher education. If we could but learn that the light spreads downward, and that the lesser talents and general average of a people can be reached and raised only through a special care for those gifted ones who are to become the people's teachers and inspirers! Learning should be given to them because they are able to receive it. Christ's teaching itself could, at first, be received by a very few; and even the apostles

misunderstood him often. One can imagine some benevolent Pharisee putting the same question to Christ: "How many will your movement reach?"

Another quiet and deep-cutting simile is the comparison of the growth of faith to the leaven in the meal. Now it is a fact that in certain natures conversion is a slow process. Such persons suspend judgment for a moment over some problem: the virus enters; they begin to see the matter with a mystical hypothesis hanging over its solution. Faith next dawns as an expansion of reason; and reason melts into mysticism.

The higher intelligence always communicates to the lower something that is very vividly expressive of truth — more expressive than the lower can say, or do, or dream for itself. And yet the lower never knows clearly to what phenomenon in nature the higher intellect has referred. This is seen, for instance, in Rembrandt's etchings. Rembrandt has, perhaps, by a hair-drawn, almost chance-drawn line in the sky, represented the edge of some invisible atmospheric density that casts a glow of gloomy passion on the scene. We could neither see nor feel this effect in nature, yet we feel its power in the drawing.

There are certain expressions in the New Testament that seem to refer to very definite experiences, things that are beyond our ken, as, for instance, when Christ says of children, that their angels do continually behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven — as if Christ saw the aura of children; or again where he says: Whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house; and if they receive you not, *your peace shall return unto you again*. This last expression reminds us vaguely of the old patriarchal blessings that could be given only once. Another such expression, and one that we feel more at home with, is the evangelist's statement that Christ felt as if virtue had gone out of him. The Gospels exert their power over the imagination of man because the story and sayings of Christ constantly refer to natural phenomena which surround human life at all times, but which are often not comprehensible to us because of our own limitations.

The message that comes out of the New Testament — I mean one of the messages that seem to come out of it — might be stated thus: —

Man is naturally good. Let him cease to contract his mind and muscles, cease to strive and insist, and he becomes benevolent. But more

than this: Man has by nature a powerful intellect. Let him cease to contract his mind and muscles, cease to strive and insist, and his head grows clear. But more than this: Man is by nature fearless. His preconceptions keep him timid and in bondage to appearances. As his mind relaxes and his vision enlarges, as he becomes aware that he is himself the creature of a superior force moving in a larger universe than he had guessed, he gains that normal courage which nothing else can give.

The most important fact in the history of Christ's influence is that he tears open every organization, whether founded on himself or not. He excites personality faster than any influence, even his own, can control or suppress it. The history of the Catholic and Protestant Churches is a history of schisms. It is through these schisms that private character in Europe has been developed. Christ is the fountain of character in Western Europe.

Christianity accomplishes itself; and this not through a grand, frontal attack on humanity, but rather through the story and sayings of Christ which dart about the earth, pierce men's ears and heal them, run like elixirs through the languages and habits of men. They are couriers,

arrows that live in the ether and need no inns or baiting-places between their flights. The sayings have inexhaustible meanings, and many depths of meaning which the comfortable people of the world cannot hope to fathom — meanings that lie in ambush in the texts, and enter men's hearts in the wake of grief. A man must have been disgraced and in jail to know many of them.

We sometimes ask ourselves, "In what possible manner can we resemble Christ — we who are born to social conditions, domestic habits, and natural endowments so different from those of Christ?" Certainly few of us are Jewish peasants, few prophets, few preachers. Yet there is one condition in which we all exactly resemble Christ; we never know or can know what step we are about to take. This pivotal moment is eternal, normal, the same in us as in him. I believe it is this fact that makes his words so effective. They always express the moment of a decision. They are always incidental, spontaneous, — how shall I say? — a part of his soul's drama. We overhear them; and they become a part of ours.

We catch sight herein of the difference between the Eastern and the Western religions. The East has the wisdom of the cell but not of

the market-place. The East is more interested in ideas than in conduct. But Christ's words pass into the practical part of men. The Gospels have left in the mind of Europe a nimbus of consciousness which cries, "Your activities are as much a part of your faith as your beliefs."

One outcome of Christ's influence is that through it the scourges of the world are turned into blessings. A man devotes himself to the alleviation of some particular form of suffering, and thereby becomes a saint who changes the moral temper of his town. What is it that has drawn out all this goodness in the man? It is due to crippled children. What has been the source of that other good Samaritan's inexhaustible benevolence? Blindness and the blind. Whence came these miracles of healing? From disease.

Part ii

Comment and Reflection

All Things Remain Within Us

The great illusion is that we can reach outside ourselves, touch something, move some spring. We are tempted every hour to push a button in somebody that will do good. And yet our sole office is to have seen the need, felt our powerlessness, moved the counters of life mechanically, and left the balm and reality of the transaction to God. The new terms that are coined to express the old mysteries are misleading. The use of the word "treatment" in regard to prayer is flat and impious. It suggests the medicine man. Indeed, there is a real connection between the two; for the medicine man is also an exponent of faith. He calls upon the higher powers; he distracts the sufferer's attention by horrible sounds; he expresses awe, if not quietude. We, too, are medicine men; but it is by taking our medicine that we heal the world; or,—to speak more accurately,— that the world is healed.

We are incinerators, and are continually employed in turning life's rubbish into divine fire. Who can fail to see what power was at work when the great, benign Walter Scott met the

tempestuous nerve-shattering young Byron in a bookshop. Scott notices Byron's irritability, but pays no heed to it. It passes; and presently Scott recites an old ballad, while Byron, taken out of himself, turns pale with emotion.

It is the paradox of our nature that we also serve when we only stand and wait, and Milton's line is touched with a mystic truth which no one has ever plumbed. What I am striving to say is that we best influence others for good when we see and say nothing, knowing that what we see has become a part of ourselves, and thus waftable, prayable — a thing to be relieved of and committed. If this be psychology, it is but the translation into a passing dialect of truths as old as religion, and best said in the Lord's Prayer. Man is unable to follow the flight of the spirit, and must content himself with a picture of results. Life meets us as a unity, and we are always at the centre of it — receiving, sending; but accumulating nothing, save a greater faith.

The Uplift has always been a rage in America. Emerson expressed his annoyance with it, and said that the reform of all reforms must be accomplished "without means." It is true that to any sensitive person the beating of drums for causes seems crude and unholy. Yet Nature is

wiser than her seers; and these drums awaken and shatter men into sentiency. A movement for playgrounds is, to many, the Sermon on the Mount; abolition was Gethsemane; ballot reform and the investigation of insurance are John the Baptist. Unselfish emotion is the great cause in which all these battles are fought. All our causes are parts of a single religious movement; and it is they that impregnate the air of the land, and have made the clear thinking of the mystics possible — including that of Emerson himself.

To anyone who has the leisure to reflect, it is plain that no cause ever comes to a conclusion. The Negro question is still with us; prohibition is an experiment in the eternal problem of self-control; disarmament is merely a form of spiritual propaganda. They seem to be specific, — or *specifics*, — but each one of them, in its march and in the waves of its progress, is broken up into conversations, into episodes between man and man, into the mysteries of personal influence, into the commonplaces of the New Testament.

The Solitudes

All things that spring from a mind that is moving freely under some form of spiritual impulse are religious in their nature. This is true of things that are small in form, a song of Burns, a lyric of Keats or of Wordsworth. It is true of good music and good pictures. The beauty has not been put into such things by their authors; but rather the authors have stood aside to let it pass: its entry has followed the removal of shutters, the dropping of veils, the clearing of a channel. The true artist does not find or fix his own axis; it finds and fixes itself. Nor does he supply the wind that turns the arms of his windmill; it is in him and in us already, but it is in us unrealized, baffled and thwarted by contrary blusters. Good books and pictures find our axis for us: they are like hydraulic turbines set into motion which let the waters, that are already welling in us, pass uninterrupted through the soul.

One thing which all powerful human deliverances have in common is that each speaks from a solitude. The solitudes differ in a thousand

ways, and yet they coalesce and form parts of one another: they are interfused. It is for this reason that people think of beauty as a unity — because all the solitudes are one. At no great distance below the surface of life is a great cave and kingdom of solitude, into which men sink to communicate with their fellows. From this eternal, resonant whispering-gallery speak all the religions, arts, poetries, and wisdoms of the earth. You need not have a fear that this realm, from which the voices issue, is to be quenched or abolished by any surface conditions of a passing day. It is never far from us, but engulfs us even at odd moments — even while we are at work among the surface waves and currents. We dip and sink into it easily: the murmurs of its music never quite die on our ears.

The inspirations of the world steam upward from this inner cauldron of solitude, and express the selfless and the universal that exists in everyone. Their influence is unitary, and their forms sprout from one another, and are not self-born, nor separated from their source. It was here, in the Cavern of Thought, that lived the old artists in their youth. Here Dante met Virgil; Keats, Spenser; Beethoven, Mozart. Every poet floats on the wings of an elder bard while

his own are growing. A single impulsion runs beneath all the poetry of the world, and there has never been a break in it. Your own verse can, in any case, be merely an eddy, a circle of dispersion for the larger influence — derivative, dedicated, wafted on. Is there a case of a poet who was not steeped in poetry, or a musician in music, or a writer in books? The men have been plunged deep and long held beneath the waves of their art, alone with music or poetic thought, till the sounds of the upper world come to them transmuted into the languages of their solitude, and thus are eloquent already, and able to speak anew to the inchoate solitudes in other men.

On the religious side of the soul's history, the idea of solitude has always been well understood. Indeed it has often been overworked and standardized into theories of hermitages, retreats, and seclusions. But the solitude that makes saints, poets, and thinkers is that habit of spiritual isolation of which physical solitude is the handmaid and the symbol. The conduct of all great genius reveals this law. Great mind is isolated by its very nature; and the lesser man, the moderate talent, is greatened by the leisure, the tendency, the ability to be alone.

This idea throws its half-light on education,

and is one of the few adumbrations—winks from Nature — which are immediately applicable in all directions, and which solve practical problems, especially those of the present epoch. The idea of solitude should hover over everything that is done for youth, like a wingèd angel, warding off the attacks of clever theory and the certitudes of the moment. The whole world has been too much theory-driven and too intense. It makes little difference what the theory is; if it be rigorously applied it will tend to stunt the individual. The mystery of life is the one certitude that will survive our day. The theories about it will shift and vary till the end of time. All that education, art, literature, religion herself can do, is to give us hints, notes, and memoranda about it.

The great powers surround us and bend their influence upon us. We cannot tell which are personal, which impersonal. One man walks in the woods to observe the animals. He wears moccasins, he moves over dried leaves without noise. His face is transfigured; he has heard a distant thrush, or seen the track of a moose. He is in a silent ecstasy of incommunicable joy. Nothing in his existence approaches this Elysium. Here, on the other hand, is the massive

Beethoven — a cloudy volume of thought, passion, sensibility; he plays two chords on the piano, and opens against our hearts the sluices of celestial power. And here at our elbow is a man, and not a gifted one either; yet he once did something that affected our thought, and turned the current of our life, because at a certain point in a conversation which happened years ago in a college room he said — just nothing at all.

The languages of life are unfathomable. We study one and it teaches us another. Religious truth, which has received the most study of any of them, seems to be a mere iris enclosing the rest — a quality which cannot be isolated. The talk of philosophers changes constantly, and the religious element comes freshly under examination. Men try to produce it synthetically, and the newer chemists hope to be more accurate than their elders, but the power shatters the crucible.

It seems to make small difference whether a man say that such a phrase or formula *is* the truth, or that the phrase or formula *refers* to a truth. Yet on this difference rests his mind's whole relation to life. The first statement ties him; the second lets him free; the first shuts windows, the second opens them; the first makes

him proud, the second, humble; the first separates him from human history, the second unites him with it. For all human thought is indeterminate, and can, at best, do no more than point in the direction of truth, trembling and oscillating like the magnetic needle under the current that swings it. If you fix the pointer in any position it will lie. The scientist and the theologian nail down the needle: the poet and the prophet let it swing.

For example: all the old discussions of Free Will profess to give a final account of what must forever remain a mystery, — perhaps *the* mystery of human life, — namely, the submergence of the personal in the impersonal. The religious person feels himself to be guided by the power of God. The men who spread the truth, make the music, move the world, have, as it were, no will — or no self-will. Good painters, poets, and musicians are as helpless as astronomers, and merely record the revolutions of certain planets and galaxies in what Shakespeare calls the "heaven of invention." The great ones eliminate themselves entirely, till nothing is left but painting, music, or poetry. It is as if they dared not arrest Nature or interfere with her clockwork. But philosophy and theology are dissatisfied

with the vagueness of Nature. Theologians with their cast-iron statements about the Will pretend to know more than we do about the matter. The very word "will" is enough to tie a man's mind into a hard knot, if it be accepted as a finality and not as a convenient bit of the vernacular which means, now one thing, now another. We must remain detached, alone, fluid, or we are lost.

Pauses and Plunges

Perhaps one can express the gigantic spirit that is in the air to-day, and sets a distance between passing events and our own souls, by saying that it is the Spirit of Waiting. We have been much harassed, much deceived, much fatigued. Our nerves are let down; we are limp; we rest. Sheer waiting is almost the essence of religious truth. It is through this experience that the individual passes toward conversion. The whole world is passing through a similar mood.

Are we then to withdraw our sympathies from the conflicts of life, and let the world slide? On the contrary, we must follow our sympathies, only remembering the while that the thing in hand is but a part of a larger, remoter, battle: the thing in hand is important because it is a symbol. We must attach our ultimate faith to no human institutions. They will not bear examination: as we study them they evaporate into mere spirit.

The same truth is often at stake under various circumstances. Witness the identity of the truth for which all the martyrs die. Socrates, Sir

Thomas More, John Brown, arouse in us the same emotion. All these men died to proclaim the right of private conscience over public law. In the case of More it was to proclaim the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church, and the right of that Church to control More's conscience. More thus became one of the canonized saints in the Roman calendar, and, at the same time, one of the great champions and authors of British Constitutional liberty. Our hearts respond to his deed as it takes rank in the history of a conflict that is behind and beyond both the Church of Rome and the Constitution of Britain. John Brown was a most flagrant criminal, yet a seraphic nature, and his death resembled an ascension

Circumstance makes truth in this world. We have to see truth for ourselves as it arises in each case, and speak when we must. This is, in fact, what men do to-day. The whole course of the modern world is a course of progress, just because the changes in government have tended to show up events as they pass, in a way that makes appeal to the private conscience. Our present indifference to theory gives room for our hearts to act freely.

He That Hath Ears To Hear

THERE is a kind of challenge or proclamation in these words, as if they might have issued from Mount Sinai; and there is a kind of helplessness in them, as if they might have been said upon the Cross. I should not dare to appropriate them; and yet they often pass through my mind when people say, "But why can't you make the thing plain? You dwell too much on such a point, and neglect such another point."

All religious statement is mere personal memoranda. If anyone had been able to put Christ's teaching into final, logical, or compelling form, he himself would have done so. It is a shining and two-edged sword that swims in the air. It flashes and pierces, but one must not strive to grasp it by the hilt or to wield it.

Day Before Yesterday

MANY years ago in Paris I saw a farce in which one of the characters constantly quoted from a tract which he carried in his pocket and which pretended to be a French edition of one of our American New Thought pamphlets. It was entitled "La force à la portée de tous" — power that anyone may use. The title gives not only the American idea of universal force, but the Yankee notion of it as a "utility." And yet the Yankees were destined to have their notions of utility rapidly enlarged by the Power; for the stream of it played upon the idealism of the nation at a time when it was almost voiceless, giving it new emotional deliverances and modulations which are destined to lead back into the older music. I am saying things which will some day be thought of, rather than trying to get the attention of anyone. The goal toward which the age has been groping its way during the last thirty years could be better described as the Right to Feel than as the Will to Believe. Feeling is thought in transition, and leaps from one man to the next. The invention of wireless came

at a moment when it gave a clue to all creation. It showed that all men were enclosed in a single current, and must be in some kind of communication with one another. The languages of religion had always rung with this idea, which now became a commonplace. A sentiment of the unity of human nature began to show in every form of Uplift. A religion of good works sprang up, which had the spontaneity of a natural force: it was insuperable. I do not say that the Uplift was the child of New Thought, but that both of them were parts of the same great spiritual revulsion, parts of a return to the right use of the faculties, and an acceptance of life as something that we subserve.

A Modern Instance

The two master-currents of the age flow through the mind of every doctor — a belief in Science, and a bowing to the mystery of health, which means the subordination of Science to unseen influence. The desire to relieve suffering softens the doctor's heart and sanctifies him; while the enormous technical apparatus of modern therapeutics bids him trust instruments rather than instinct. His mind thus becomes a Lorraine glass which shows in little the great spiritual battle of the age. An episode which occurred at one of our public laboratories pictures the problem in a way that does not often happen without the aid of a dramatist. The story gives us pause, because a cynic might cite it in triumph. In the plot of the story, Calculation murders Human Feeling and scores its point; Germany seems to win the war.

The director of the laboratory in question, himself a distinguished scientist, had decided that the most telling work that could be done by his corporation was the identification of the bacillus of syphilis — a thing which had baffled

all bacteriologists theretofore. The institution is devoted to pure research-work and employs investigators much as a dye-factory employs chemists: it pays them salaries and enjoys the glory of their discoveries. Among the employees of this laboratory was a Japanese biological chemist, whose subtlety of thought and astounding deftness of hand were among the prize possessions of the institution. No one in the world was quite his equal in the artificial culture of certain germs and the study of their relations to the antitoxins generated by nature in the blood. This enthusiast was engaged in making the most recondite experiments on antitoxins in general, but was not specially concerned with syphilis. The last of a long series of tests, which existed in the form of eighty or a hundred glass tubes, were set in a frame on a table. The cultures bore complex relations to the theories which he had carried in his head for months and worked over with the passion that characterizes this particular form of genius. The investigation of antitoxins is, of course, as important as anything that can be imagined in the field of germs.

The director, however, had, at various times, tried to divert this man's attention exclusively to the syphilis problem, especially as this

employee did not seem to be showing results with the efficiency demanded by the institution. Of course the Jap could not expound his half-born insights to a board of management, or give such an account of his time as would show favorably on a balance sheet. The director appeared one day, and somewhat impatiently asked the experimenter how he was getting on. The scholar looked up from his work. "Very well," said he, and continued in his dreams.

A week or two later the director appeared again with the same question, and receiving no better answer than before, he sprang forward, seized the table, and hurled it upon the floor, spilling the little bottles like the spools of a half-woven tapestry or the thoughts of an author's projected novel. The man's visions were burned alive before his face. The Oriental burst into tears.

The act of tyranny produced the service exacted of the slave. The Jap was set to work on the bacillus of syphilis, and identified it. And yet who is there that does not feel that Science herself is imperiled by adopting this attitude toward her own genius? Syphilis is still among us; and just what importance is to be attached to this particular piece of work on it only a

specialist can guess. But one thing we know. We know what will be the effect on the future of Science, if its destinies are left in the hands of men who deal with the human spirit as was done here.

The Heroes of Science

I COPY the following from a daily paper. It shows that the heroism of Science is not scientific, but is merely heroic.

"Another reminder of the heroism of peace, equaling that of war, is provided by the story of Dr. Howard B. Cross, of the Rockefeller Institute, who died the other day of yellow fever at Vera Cruz. He deliberately abjured safety to visit a notorious plague-spot, to study one of the most deadly of diseases, hoping to discover more efficient means of checking its ravages. He did a hero's work, and died a hero's death. He was a worthy follower of Jesse Lazear, who, to prove the method of transmission of that disease, subjected himself to infection, and through whose death the lives of thousands have been saved and Cuba, Panama, and Ecuador have been cleansed.

"Pasteur, the Frenchman, was the first great discoverer and pioneer in the new era of medical science; Finlay, the Anglo-Cuban, first applied Pasteur's theory to yellow fever, and Noguchi, the Japanese, completed the demonstration. But

it was the Americans — Reed, Carroll, Lazear, and their unnamed followers of the rank and file — who, at the risk of the lives of all and at the cost of the life of one, proved in their own bodies the truth of the great principle and blazed the way to the abolition of the plague; it was the American, Gorgas, who actually eliminated the disease from three of the lands which for generations past it had most ravaged; and it was Americans such as Dr. Cross and Dr. Haedrick — who died a few months ago — who extended the same beneficent work in the only remaining country of this hemisphere in which the disease seriously prevails.

"Great is science! Its saints and martyrs almost equal in devotion and in number those of religion."

Now Is the Time

The infinitude of theories and isms into which art and letters blossomed — or rather withered — toward the close of the last century gave a key to the mental condition of those times. It was an era of special discoveries, special beliefs in every province of thought; of strongly held opinions, and the insurgence of new theories. A man was hardly satisfied unless he was expounding something.

The tendency in the great public, moreover, was to accept teaching. Any doctrine that was new and plausible stood a good chance of acceptance. The World War came as a terrible shock; for it showed that everyone had been living on a volcano and in a fool's paradise. The greatest intellectual influence of the war has been an unconscious one — men are unable to take human institutions, or theories about them, as seriously as they did before 1914.

Who shall say that this present era, when all the idols are broken, all the great traditions dead, and the fine arts have become mere wandering lights, while the mind of man seems

to have passed into a tunnel of transition — who shall say that these apparent extinguishments and this twilight are not necessary? Our present incredulity as to all the explanations of life is very favorable to a direct vision of life itself. The floods have carried away our mills, and a thunderstorm has destroyed the wiring of our houses; but the powers of gravity and electricity are not abolished for a moment. The contrivances on which we had set so much store served but to obscure the phenomena. Like Job in the wreck of his homestead, we have been humbled. The war humbled that spirit which had ruled the nineteenth century. In scale the drama differed from the Book of Job, but in plot it was similar.

In the meantime, though the arts have lost their message, religion stalks in upon us. The auld wives' tales about prayer and healing, which during many centuries had been regarded as ecstatic parables, are now taken literally: we live in them. This tunnel into which the age is running is one of the clairvoyant periods of history, in which men are seen as trees walking. The actual world does not disappear, nor is it relegated to a life to come, or disparaged, or condemned as evil. It remains perfectly real, and

yet visibly penetrated by the rays of an inner universe which are at play everywhere.

The epoch will not last forever; and these things, so plainly seen by us, will again become incredible, and our words about them will be thought dark sayings, too hard for common minds to understand. We cannot avert change, or prolong forever the present era of clairvoyance: it will pass. No words have ever been found that would catch religion. It plays hide-and-seek with humanity, wraps itself in disguises, and leaves a painted image in the bed where the body of faith lay the night before. It is ever taking refuge with outcasts.

Civilization rolls along like a mob pouring out of a theatre, pushing, hustling, toiling, dreaming, contending; preoccupied, intense, swept one knows not whither; and at each moment undergoing inconceivable changes. It is a phantasmagoria made up of millions, and each man is ablaze with imagination. And in the stream and whirl of it, from time to time, certain powers, peculiar visions, often not realized till afterward — certain talents are developed; and everyone paints or writes verse, thinks in music, lives in decoration, swims in passionate theology or in political metaphysics, and leaves behind a

language or cycle of thought, — some art or craft or tradition, — enmeshed in the living flow of all the past, yet so specific and appealing in its nature that it retains its own special eloquence forever. We envy the illumination of these articulate periods, forgetting that it is the unconscious part of them which shouts most loudly in our ears. All that those people *did not know they were* is what interests us. We envy them, as we envy the animals, for their aplomb, forgetting that we could not be as they, without losing our birthright.

For in the ruck and tumult of the passing, ugly world to-day there are sights more remarkable than could be seen by Charlemagne. In the roofless destruction of all theologies, poetries, paintings, theories of government, certain naked and tremendous operations of nature are laid bare as never before — and yet we are so familiar with them that we pass them by almost unheeded.

There is indubitable charm in the old arts, in the dramas of Greece, the cathedrals, the romances and allegories invented by man's symphonic mind since Plato's time. And all such things are fictions. They each tell us a little more than they know: they console us, but in

a language not quite our own. They dramatize our desires, and build groinings in the sky above us. In the present roofless age the reality above such things has been opened in a glare of power that almost blinds us when we gaze toward it. We mutter to ourselves, "So this was the basis and the background of all the moral myths, stained-glass windows, tragedies, and parables which the world was brought up on!" If the present age has no clear artistic utterance, it has events; and this voiceless era is the age of miracles.

Personality and Institutions

We see institutions as if they were dispensaries giving out something; whereas their chief use is to be centres of absorption. The mere function of drawing together the talented youth of a country is the main point of a university. The boys make it what it is, and will make it what it shall become. During the last fifty years American boys have looked on college as mothers are apt to look on the infant dancing-class — as a step up in society. Our colleges perform a wonderful social service: they are boys' clubs and men's clubs. Educationally they are nearly extinct so far as the old humanities go. They have been put to the service of certain crude new humanities; but when the famine for the old ones arises in the community it will show again in the college. The most valuable stimulus which boys get, they get from one another. The college provides grouping-points; and out of a group springs cultivation.

It is therefore misplaced effort to go battering at our university magnates to try to get them to retain the classics. To them it seems as if you

were asking them to do homage to false gods. If you are a scholar, pursue your own tastes, and let their influence leak into the learned world; for, after all, a university is but a cistern into which private tastes have oozed. Those who pursue their own loved studies quietly rule the tastes of the next generation. One man collects old Chinese bronzes; another studies the coloration of animals, or the heritable variations of plants; another, Persian vases; and their tastes turn insensibly into departments in colleges and new wings to museums. The direction of the world's education depends on the hobbies of amateurs. In the case of poets and thinkers this law has always been recognized; for the poets, the most helpless and whimsical of all men, have led the van of intellect, and — most strange of all — they have the name and fame of leading it.

It is as a mystic that Lincoln is valued; and if you should be asked to name another American to set beside and below him, most people would say "Emerson!" What a collocation! Yet the reason of it is clear. Each of these men expressed his private mind and most intimate nature; the one through a handful of strange little brilliant essays, and the other through a torrent of letters, speeches, State papers, interviews, acts, anec-

dotes, which absorbed the attention of thirty million people during a great crisis in their history. I swear that the fame of Emerson is fifty times as remarkable as that of Lincoln. Both illustrate the long-distance striking-power of personal thought, in one case orchestra'd by a nation and a war, and in the other, proceding from a lonely fiddler on a sidewalk.

It is personal temperament that gives institutions their value. At best they are makeshifts, and most of the conscious effort of the world is spent in boosting some makeshift. This cannot be avoided; but it can be remembered, and the thought emancipates us. I see so many men, and noble men, too, pushing their little go-carts — "my school," "my college," "our church," "our club"; and one of the most insidious blindnesses of the world grows out of this seeming virtuous habit. The blight attacks the educators, and is most notably seen in boys' schools, where every appeal to school loyalty contains a little tincture of mind-killing poison, administered, one might say, all the time. What is any school, that one should be loyal to it? A school should strive to fix the boys' eyes on certain stars, teaching the boys that their only duty is to serve the light and stand ready at any moment to attack their

school if it seems to be losing sight of those stars. But no: it is so much easier to appeal to partisan feeling, which is always superfluously strong in the young, than it is to awaken their intelligence, that the schoolmasters spend half their energy in doping the boys with school loyalty, and leaving them purblind for life. It takes a strong brain in a boy for him to pass through one of our private schools and have any individual power of vision left over.

The defects of executive persons come from unfaith. The Germans would control fate; the practical chemist would direct the man of genius; your schoolmaster is bent on turning out "leaders of men." He is a religious person, this schoolmaster, and comes straight from prostration and prayer; and now he is prepared to "create leaders." He will form, mould, fill out, follow up, train, and educate leaders of men. What a project! What a grotesque conception of his own office is here discovered! If it should happen in the course of a long ministry that one or two leaders of men should pass through his hands, it would be his best glory to recognize them, and try to prevent his institution from grinding them down into the stupefied, loyal, commonplace citizens so dear to his heart.

The great law of not attempting too much lies behind and underneath our life, and beams through humanity in the form of humility, religious truth, art, poetry — things that reveal the law as a light shining upon clouds above, while all that lies below in the landscape seems to contradict it. Its admonition must be remembered in the midst of every effort. Our true aim is to permit something to accomplish itself. Even a death-grapple is a mere symbol of something beyond, which is being accomplished through death.

It is a blessing that we cannot understand such things and follow them out; for then we should be responsible for the universe — the very thing which we escape at present.

As men pass from youth to middle age, and from middle age to old age, they meet at a cross-roads and utter a dictum. From whatever point they started, and by whatever route they wandered, we find them saying, — both great men and little men, the clever ones, the stupid ones, the successful and the impotent, — "After all, I was a cog; I have been turned over and controlled and directed all my life like a bobbin in a silk-mill." What religion says is, "Turn freely and trust the Power."

Heaven and Earth To Gain One Proselyte

The best way to preserve truth is to fling it like bread upon the waters. Make no effort to hoard it. Consider the conduct of Christ, and how he committed his wisdom to the winds. We need never fear that our light will go out, so long as we foment it with vision. Accept it as evanescent, if you like; stand to let it pass, and it will not pass. This is the nature of the good that a man can do in this world: the more unseen, the more inextinguishable. As for the effect of your action on passing events, this will take care of itself: the hour strikes and you find yourself in them — but not lost in them.

I wonder whether the attempt to convert others be not illusion. How far do our words reach? We ourselves were not converted by argument, but by life. If you must try to convert or assist people, do it by prayer; and add a prayer that your prayers may not do them more harm than good.

It is true that we have to-day church-unity movements, and men getting up early in the

morning and crying, "The herring are in the harbor! Out with your nets!" But who knows whether the present diversity of creeds be not a condition that favors faith? The power of faith flashes not through conclaves and convocations, but from man to man. It must be that diversity is good; for we are surrounded by the fires of new faith on every side.

The Theologies

The substance of faith is the same in all ages. All the mystics, whether Scriptural, Neoplatonic, Christian, or Pagan, deal with the same experience; and a very little study puts us at home in any one of them, whether he be a monk, a Roman prelate, or a Quaker. The other day I was reading the *Spiritual Guide* of Molinos, a Spanish priest who died toward the end of the seventeenth century. My first feeling was, "What an age of holy individuals this book implies! All its admonitions are, one sees, addressed to very holy people; its problems are the problems of saints." One must, of course, humor the theology of Molinos. In that age men sought God through a personal perfectionism which has become unpleasant to us. They were saving their souls; they believed in a complex scheme of salvation and in a dozen dogmas, and they accepted the authority of a Church. Yet within the turning of all these intricate wheels one can follow the essential process of a devolution of the will, an absorption — an evaporation — of the mind into the Power that made

it. Molinos was condemned by the Inquisition, and his book was so completely suppressed that no copy of it has survived in the original Spanish. His theology is strictly, scrupulously, and almost morbidly correct; and great difficulty was experienced in condemning him. The reason that he had to be suppressed was a practical one: the book, as a matter of fact, was creating a sect which slighted the priesthood. It built a tower to God inside of theology, yet outside of the hierarchy. It was the least protestant — the least protesting — book ever written; and yet it weakened the hierarchy, because it enabled Christians to get on without the hierarchy, or with very little appeal to it. Almost every page of the book is a lesson in how to give up worrying about one's own salvation, though this salvation is, of course, the bull's-eye at which the manual aims. Its lessons consist of marvelously accurate directions as to how to accomplish holiness by not trying to accomplish it.

If you compare such a book as Molinos' Guide, where every page records centuries of pious experience, — like a tapestry where old saints and angels have been so woven into the texture that you cannot tell where the sky begins and the landscape ends,—if you read such a book

sympathetically, it will make any of our modern New Thought handbooks, with their crude dogmas, arbitrary psychology, and rough dealing, seem like a rag carpet. Yet all are founded on the same Biblical ideas. They have arisen out of the same human need, and seek truth by parallel paths. In all of them a mind is seeking union with God, an axis on which it can turn.

The most enormous thing of the kind ever attempted was Dante's *Divine Comedy*, which, with all its complexities, is so polarized by a few great thoughts, and so smoothly expressed, that it not only turns on an axis, but moves in an orbit — swings like a constellation in a region of its own. It has a momentum, a rapture, a self-motion as of a dream.

The discovery that our life and mind are kept in motion by God is the truth that all such books and teachings tell. Let us examine this discovery in its most limited, wooden, and inartistic form — that of Quakerism. Limited, but terribly sincere; wooden, but of British oak.

The greatest Quaker theologian was Robert Barclay, who wrote an apology for the sect in Charles II's time. The following is condensed from his Proposition XI, Section vii. The italics and the capitals are his own.

As there can be nothing more opposite to the natural Will and Wisdom of Man, than this *silent waiting upon God;* so neither can it be obtained, nor rightly comprehended by Man, but as he layeth down his own wisdom and will, so as to be content to be thoroughly subject to God. And therefore it is not preached, nor can be so practised, but by such as find no outward Ceremony, no Observations, no Words; yea, not the best and purest Words, even the words of Scripture, able to satisfy their weary and afflicted Souls; Because where all these may be, the Life, Power, and Virtue which make such things effectual may be wanting. Such, I say, were necessitated to cease from all outwards, and to be silent before the Lord; and being directed to that inward Principle of *Life* and *Light* in themselves, as the most excellent Teacher, which *can never be removed into a corner*, came thereby to be learned to wait upon God in the measure of life and grace received from him, and to cease from their own forward Words and Actings, in the natural Willing and Comprehension, and feel after their inward seed of Life; that, as it moveth, they may move with it, and be acted by its Power, and influenced, whether to Pray, Preach or Sing. . . .

. . . And when any are through the breaking forth of this Power, constrained to utter a Sentence of Exhortation or Praise, or to Breathe to the Lord in Prayer, then all are sensible of it, for the same Life *in* them answers to it, *as in Water, Face answereth to Face.* This is *that divine* and *spiritual Worship*, which

the world neither knoweth nor understandeth, which the *Vulture's* eye seeth not into.

. . . And such a one is felt by the rest to minister Life unto them without words. Yea, sometimes when there is not a word in the Meeting but all are silently waiting; if one come in that is rude and wicked, and in whom the Power of Darkness prevaileth much, perhaps with an intention to mock or do mischief; if the whole meeting be gathered into the *Life*, and it be raised in a good measure, it will strike terror into such a one, and he will feel himself unable to resist; but by the secret strength and virtue thereof, the power of Darkness in him will be chained down.

. . . Of which I myself, in a part, am a true Witness; who not by strength of Arguments, or by a particular Disquisition of each Doctrine and Convincement of my understanding thereby, came to receive and bear witness to the Truth; but by being secretly reached by this Life.

Barclay calls this a Proposition; but it is an Experience: the hum of life is in it: the power streams from the page.

Let us turn back a few centuries. There is a well-known little tract called *The Cloud of the Unknowing*, written in English and probably by a monk in the thirteenth century. The substance of the manual is given in the title. To-day it would perhaps be catalogued as an essay on the unconscious. The design of it is to assist the

reader toward that state of mind during which our faculties are replenished by God — a condition of mystical receptivity and rest.

Lift up thine heart unto God with a meek stirring of love; and mean Himself, and none of His goods. And thereto, look thee loath to think on aught but Himself. So that naught work in thy wit, nor in thy will, but only Himself. And do that in thee is to forget all the creatures that ever God made and the works of them; so that thy thought nor thy desire be not directed nor stretched to any of them, neither in general nor in special, but let them be, and take no heed to them. This is the work of the soul that most pleaseth God. All saints and angels have joy of this work, and hasten them to help it in all their might. All fiends be furious when thus thou dost, and try for to defeat it in all that they can. All men living in earth be wonderfully holpen of this work, thou wottest not how. Yea, the souls in purgatory be eased of their pain by virtue of this work. Thyself art cleansed and made virtuous by no work so much. And yet it is the lightest work of all, when a soul is helped with grace in sensible list, and soonest done. But else it is hard, and wonderful to thee for to do.

Let not, therefore, but travail therein till thou feel list. For at the first time when thou dost it, thou findest but a darkness; and as it were a cloud of unknowing, thou knowest not what, saving that thou feelest in thy will a naked intent unto God.

The book is permeated by a sort of Anglo-

Saxon common-sense and also by a technique of the confessional — the doctor's manner which reappears in our modern practitioners of psychiatry. Only its spirit is holy; whereas theirs is merely respectful. The author of *The Cloud of the Unknowing* is, of course, interested in a scheme of salvation, in the dominion of the Church, and in various dogmas. He expresses himself in what is to many of us a jargon; just as we who are interested in natural law, in hygiene, popular government, and uplift, talk in what will some day seem to posterity like a jargon. *The Cloud of the Unknowing* gives sight of an idea, however, which will survive both the author's philosophy and our own, and will pass down the ages assuming various forms, like the Cloud of Light which it is.

Let us now look at a modern Roman Catholic rendering of the same thesis. There is a famous Spanish novel called *El Escandalo*. It is like certain Russian novels in form, in that it is told in a long night-and-day interview between a sainted old Jesuit priest and an atheistic young nobleman, whose life has become tied into hard knots through his passions and misconduct and who faces ruin in all its forms. The plot is intricate, romantic, fiery, perfectly articulated and knitted up into an artistic whole in the best manner of

Dumas. The story unrolls beneath the comment of the two protagonists, the sinner and the priest, who serve as a sort of prologue and chorus-in-heaven above the action. The dramatic and melodramatic incidents would enthrall the attention of the humblest reader; and the talk they give rise to would interest anyone who was curious about human life and conduct. The problem is, How can the young man get out of the fix he is in? What course will the saint advise?

Very gradually is the veil withdrawn: All depends on the conversion of the young atheist. At last one sees that the priest is going to advise the youth to accept the situation, acknowledge his horrible misdeeds, and welcome such contumely and punishment as come to him — even the unjust part of it. The acceptance of the programme makes a man of the sinner. His willingness to stand the worst the world can do causes the conspiracy against him to fall together like a card house.

The power of this book comes from a deeper source than Spain or than Catholicism. The idea in Alarcon's *El Escandalo* is the main thought in Hebrew history, and the controlling idea in Greek tragedy — a submission to Divine Will as the solution of all moral problems.

Sisyphus

All propaganda are seen to generate counter-irritants of their own. We observed this process with regard to the German propaganda in America in the years 1914–15. The more the Germans explained their cause, the more horrified we grew. It did not occur to us that we were herein getting sight of an unsuspected natural law, which may be expressed thus: Any statement that exactly suits the view of some organization is never quite true. The better the fit, the more obvious to the rest of the world is the untruth. People argue instinctively that a certain view must be false, because it suits the British, or the French, or the Jews, or the Jesuits, or the Socialists, too snugly. Propaganda defeats itself; and to this natural law we owe the preservation of society. Otherwise, the world would become all one thing. For instance: The Masons are historically hostile to the Roman Church. The Masonic order is, therefore, singled out by the Catholics for special reprobation, and vice versa. Each party thus points out a camp on a hill to which its enemies may resort, and thus consolidates the numbers of its foes.

Spectres

Repentance means the shooting of new life through a bruised fibre; and of course it hurts. Very often the first notice we have of some old inward injury is the pain of its cure. This is what happens in ordinary sickness; then why not with the emotions? Remorse, which is said to be the worst pain known to man, is the tuning of a harp. Let a man neither withstand it nor assist it, and it will end by striking chords of music in him. One need never go in search of the Dark Tower. When that ghost rises whose cue it is to speak, it will speak.

Beauty and Power

To-day we think in terms of force and of change. If we see a statue or hear a play we discuss its tendency and influence. We wonder what it will accomplish and how it will affect men's thought and feeling. Michael Angelo and Shakespeare and John Keats were not thinking of force, but of beauty. Nevertheless, the works of Michael Angelo and Shakespeare operated as cyclonic forces, and a few phrases of Keats, although they were little more than apostrophes to Stillness, have swayed the whole of British poetry for a century. Even in the superficies of society we see the workings of this strange, vast law — the relation between quietude and force. The graces of life reveal it; such qualities as draughtsmanship, manners, style, reveal it. They are sought as beauty; but being found, they are power.

Rhapsodists

As a rule the weakest part of theologies and theological treatises is the conclusion. How handsomely they all start off, like ships from port, with a light breeze filling their brave sails! And how often (as we turn to their final pages to slake our thirst for knowledge) do we see them founder in the offing, just beyond the breakwater, where so many galleons have gone down. Conclusions are lame and impotent, and the reason is plain. There are no conclusions in nature; nor can any round-up of ideas have more finality than the first two notes of a rhapsody. The best-constructed endings are no more than time signals, like those letters called *terminals* in hieroglyphic writing, which add no new meaning to the text but signify that a period has been reached. The great musicians know this, and prepare us for the end by hints and pauses; by summaries, recapitulations, and the closing symbols of their art, such as we feel in those premonitory chords which warn us that Beethoven is coming down the mountain. Conventional they are, and ought to be — parachutes for the descent of the artist, leaving his creations in the sky.

The Skeptics

The men who are never satisfied with appearances but are ever in search of a more refined analysis, who pulverize conventions and let the wind blow the dust from between their fingers — such men are, strange as it may seem, those who give us the most vivid pictures of truth. Shakespeare is one; Velasquez is another; Socrates is a third. The more you strip life of the envelopes which disguise it, the nearer you come to divine force.

The great so-called skeptics — I mean those who have the name of skeptics — are never skeptical enough; for their joy is destructive merely. They tear customary thought to rags; and either they feel sure that there is nothing of value hid in the rags (which is wrong) or else they feel sure that they know what it is (which is also wrong, for a skeptic should remain skeptical as to both these points). These titular skeptics drag out some man-of-straw, and then destroy him with a shower of wit. They are forever killing the dead. They become hierarchs by opposition to hierarchy, and show their

limitations as it were in the mirror of their aversions. The Greek gods are Lucian's man-of-straw; human reason is Montaigne's; the Roman Curia is Voltaire's. Lucian is the best writer of the three because he has the lightest touch and the best humor. And besides, his *bête noire* — the gods — had become almost a joke long before he took to ridiculing them. Montaigne, however, is serious. He is so desperately in earnest in his attack upon Reason, and so successful in the process of reasoning by which he destroys reason, that he finds himself without any armor that will resist the Church's tyrannies. Folding his hands meekly, he accepts them all. Montaigne is not skeptical enough. Nor is Voltaire; for Voltaire accepts the claim of the Roman Church of his day to represent Christianity, and is ready to burn the child with the house. Thus Voltaire is not a first-rate skeptic: he is too sure that there is nothing good about Christianity.

Another thinker of somewhat the same class and of extraordinary power, comes into my mind — Pascal. Born to be one of the greatest skeptics that ever lived, and author of that phrase which summarizes forever the feeling of the true skeptic, — "le cœur a ses raisons que

la raison ne connait pas," — he nevertheless distrusted his own skepticism. Turning theologian, he attempted to preserve for mankind what cannot be preserved in a formula, and killed himself trying to can the manna.

The Victor-Victim

Clever people touch the mysteries of life as a cat touches a whirligig. The Greeks, the Romans, and the French are practical and witty; they do not surrender themselves easily to those fumes of emotion which are half thought and half feeling, or identify themselves with the current of life as the mystics do. And yet such natures can often see a half truth with wonderful clearness, and express it in an epigram. They sometimes draw a hemisphere with greater accuracy than the mystics themselves can show in drawing the sphere.

The remark attributed to Aristotle, that "the mind sets nothing in motion," is a half truth of this kind. The whole truth would be that not only the mind sets nothing in motion, but the mind itself receives all of its own motion from elsewhere, being turned and veered by unimaginable forces, whose existence nothing except art or religion can even suggest.

To the Greek, however, this wind of the spirit was imperceptible, and theories about it did not interest him. Nor did the intellectual Roman

care for this kind of abstract discussion, taken up as he was with political ideas and questions of government. And yet it was a Roman who said, "Impera parendo" (if you would rule men, you must do it by obeying the laws of their mind and nature) — a half truth so remarkable and so profoundly expressed as almost to suggest a vision of eternity and the helplessness of man. For whatever we accomplish in any field is accomplished through obedience. We subserve the agency that does the work.

A glimmer of this same idea is seen in the French cynic's phrase, "Surtout, pas trop de zêle!" (Above all, don't put too much of yourself in it!) This hint is religion in the form of a bon mot. And all three of these witty sayings of the Greek, of the Roman, and of the Frenchman, are references to the paradox of existence. They are fragments of mysticism, and are written from right to left in the Hebrew manner.

The Indian Saint

To-day I went to see a saint from India. His face was like tea roses seen at dusk, his hair like silk. He was almost immovable and spoke in a low voice lest he should be disturbed in limb or in thought. For he was living within a contemplation that had endured for decades; and a turbine of soft fire from the outer empyrean came wheeling down into the back of his neck, so that his head was bent forward and his eyes were as the eyes of the dreamer.

He knew a great deal—almost everything, one might think. He was like a plant growing out of a bottle, seen through the glass of seven greenhouses, bearing a gorgeous flower, untouchable, sacred, delicate, revealing so much of India and of Indian ideas that no one need go there who had seen him.

His inner silence is deep and blossoms thus. Lifelong protection from sights and sounds of the world, the mind fixed on God, abjection, faith, helplessness, the bathing of the inner soul in the essence of life, have caused this miraculous, touching, and sickly plant to bloom. But

what else — what else does the flower signify? Where else will its fruits be seen? In whose hearts and lives do its tendrils coil? We do not know.

Certainly, what we see here is the sign and symbol of a power circumfused about the earth, qualifying everything, entering everywhere, a part of us, a form of our own thought. We cannot deny this power without confuting ourselves and biting our own tongues. Why then is this particular form of it so foreign to us? Because it is not Christian. It is Hindu. The man has his revelation; he is better perhaps than you or I, because he is wholly subdued by his beliefs. Yet there is somewhere a method, an analysis, a formula — there is somewhere an algebra that is responsible for these beautiful and eccentric curves. They have risen in response to a practice. He has specialized in the soul. He brings pain, too. If he were a child with a crooked spine he would excite in us a kindred compassion, with his lustrous beauty, his power, and his impotence.

I mention this saint of India in contrast to the domestic miscellaneousness of Christ's teaching. The fireside, the crib, social life, common facts, friendship, business relations, the great trials of

character that occur all the time over small things, the intimate rubs of the world and the relation of God to them — all these matters seem to be Christ's field. He reaches the heart of a mystery incidentally in reaching the heart of some man. Cast out the beam out of thine own eye; Where two or three are gathered together; Go and do thou likewise; Forbid them not. The symbolic meaning always flows out of its primary meaning. We must go through the primary meaning in order to reach the symbolism. You must have stood on the doorstep first if you would reach the closet meaning or cloister meaning of these sayings. The mysticisms of the East begin with a higher symbolism and seem never to reach an application. "I am not sure that I have intellect enough to follow your doctrine," says the Christian to the Hindu, to the Buddhist, to the Taoist. "What is the bearing of your thought upon the position of women in the East?"

Sickness

The fish doubts the existence of sea water until he is caught. So we of God.

How terrible is our first experience of pleurisy! Who is this that has us by the lungs? Who is it that has invaded this body that we had thought to be ours? Here 's treason in the citadel, and murder, too; and the worst is that they have been crowned with success. We are manacled and cast into the dungeon. Our head is in the stocks already, and sharp punishment follows even a gesture of protest. By degrees our muscles teach us the mood of submission, and give lectures to the spirit. We gasp with humility.

A hospital is a school of philosophy where the greatest prizes often go to the youngest scholars. Happy is he that has known sickness in his youth. He is indoctrinated into the mysteries of suffering. His spirit has been subdued: he can learn easily now. Therefore let us not look with too much pity on the boy with the lame hip. He is walking straight enough, perhaps, in fields which are closed to his brothers and sisters. He

has the great pass-key. And when we see a sick child lying on a bed and wearing that unchildlike look of patience on his little brow, we may say, Happy being, and one that is paying a light toll now for what grown men wreck their lives to learn — submission. Give him a toy; but do not weep over him. The little Ulysses is sitting in his crib chained to the mast, and his ears are stopped with wax. But he is being carried past the Sirens.

To be chained to a stake sharpens the wits wonderfully, whether for old or young. Our power of locomotion is an enemy to religion; and the common illusion that the will is free is probably due to our perpetual peregrinations. This gadding gives us a feeling of being originators and independent animals. There are certain translucent, submarine creatures, half plant, half fish, that grow at first on the sea bottom, but afterward become detached from their stalks and seem to acquire the power of locomotion. In reality, however, they at all times follow the impulse of the stream, of the light, and the electricity in which they are bathed and of which they are the children. They remain mere creatures, neutral and obedient things, after their detachment, even as they

were before. Yet I am persuaded that even these sea creatures no sooner become detached and have the power of motion, than they adopt a belief in Free Will. No doubt they brag about their purposes, and talk of taking their children to the seashore. But put one of them back on his stalk, and he would grow wise and humble again. He would quickly acknowledge the power that made him, and say his prayers.

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